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ABSTRACT

Sharing concerns and interests of New York State educators in the improvement of literacy, this annual journal raises educational issues such as appropriate, effective instruction and assessment for all of New York's children. A central thread found in many of the articles is the importance of authentic or meaningful experiences that invite students into the community of learners. A second strand in the articles in the journal questions many of the evaluation procedures and instruments used to evaluate literacy understandings. Articles in the journal are "Inclusion or Exclusion: No Other Choice" (Connell Frazer); "Thematic Learning: A Classroom Model" (Susan Lehr and Ruth Andrea Levinson); "Yesterday's Children: Implications for Today and Tomorrow" (Helen M. Lounsbury); "Storytelling: A Journey into the Woods" (Marni Schwartz); "A Proposal for Revising CAR Procedures in New York State" (Richard Allington); "Examining the Value of Using Alternative Writing Approaches to Enhance Literacy Development" (Richard Sinatra and Jeffrey Beaudry); "Profiling Children's Narrative Discourse" (Peter Mosenthal); "Should We Rely on the Degrees of Reading Power Test for Third Grade Testing in New York State?" (Reva Cowan); "Portfolios in the Classroom: The Right Tool at the Right Time" (Barbara E. Combs); and "From the Shelves of Hodge-Podge" (Frank Hodge). (RS)

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A Journal of the NEW YORK STATE READING ASSOCIATION

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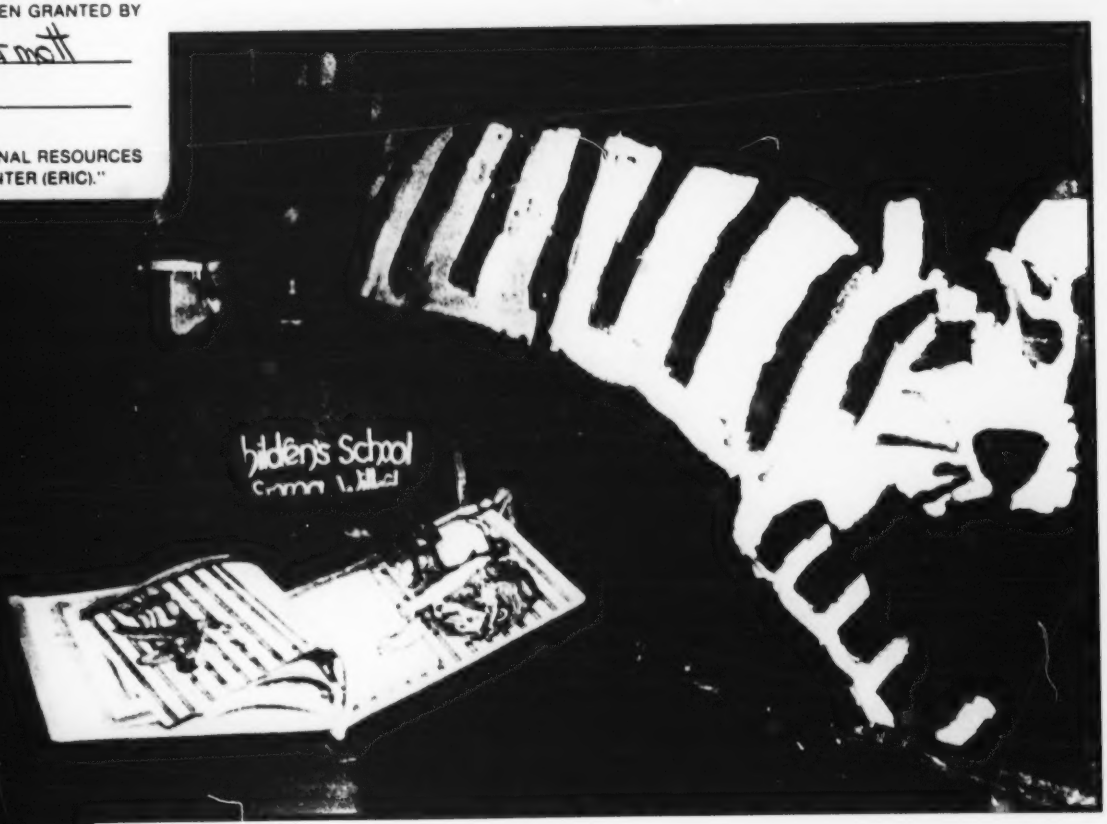

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Volume 4 ■ *Spring 1994*

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Call for Manuscripts

The Language and Literacy Spectrum, a journal of the New York State Reading Association

Theme: ***Literacy in the Global Community***

The fourth volume of the Language and Literacy Spectrum is being prepared for spring 1995 publication. The theme of this volume is Literacy in the Global Community and manuscripts pertaining to this theme will receive priority review by the Editorial Board. Manuscripts relating to global literacy, classroom language, children's literature, reading and limited English speaking students, emergent and beginning reading, content area reading instruction, literacy and children of poverty, assessment and inclusion of special and remedial students are some of the topics that would be especially welcomed.

The **Language and Literacy Spectrum** accepts contributions from teachers, teacher educators, researchers and other interested individuals. Contributors must submit three copies of each manuscript with an abstract of 75-100 words. Manuscripts must be between 10-20 pages long and typed according to APA format. Author(s) should be identified on title page only. If a manuscript is accepted for the journal, contributors will be required to submit a 3.5" floppy disk of the manuscript in WordPerfect format, for either IBM or MacIntosh computer.

Deadline for submission: December 1, 1994

Submit to: Drs. K. Gormley and P. McDermott, Editors
Language and Literacy Spectrum
Education Department
The Sage Colleges
Troy, New York 12180
Fax 518-271-4545
E-mail: Spectrum @UAC1.Albany.Edu

JOURNAL OF
THE NEW YORK STATE READING ASSOCIATION

THE LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SPECTRUM

VOLUME 4 SPRING 1994

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Kathleen A. Gormley & Peter C. McDermott
Associate Professors

THE SAGE COLLEGES
Education Department
Troy, NY 12180

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The Editors and the New York State Reading Association wish to acknowledge the financial support of The Sage Colleges; Dr. David H. Goldenberg, Executive Dean of The Sage Colleges, is thanked for his support of our endeavors.

INFORMATION

The **New York State Reading Association** is a statewide organization made up of 43 local reading councils across the state. The goal of NYSRA and the local councils is to promote literacy and general improvement of reading at all levels, and to encourage reading as a lifetime activity. A Subscription to the **Spectrum** can be obtained by sending $5.00 to:

Language and Literacy Spectrum
NYSRA
Sage Estates
Menands, NY 12204

The ***Language and Literacy Spectrum*** is a publication of the New York State Reading Association. It is published annually and intended for a wide professional audience including classroom teachers, reading and special educators, consultants and specialists, college and university faculty, parents and administrators of schools as well as others interested in literacy, reading and the language arts.

The ***Language and Literacy Spectrum*** seeks manuscripts dealing with topics, ideas and events of interest and value to teachers, specialists and administrators involved in reading/language arts instruction at all levels of education.

The deadline for submitting manuscripts is **December 1, 1994.** Manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be addressed to:

Drs. Gormley & McDermott, Editors
Language & Literacy Spectrum
Education Department
The Sage Colleges
Troy, NY 12180
FAX (518) 271-4545
E-mail: Spectrum @UACI.Albany.Edu

PHOTOGRAPHY

On the cover is ***Lyndon Johnson***, a third grader at the Children's School, Emma Willard. One inside photo is of ***Mrs. Susan Faith*** and third graders, ***Anna Newton*** and ***Akintunde Akinjiola***, from The Doane Stuart School. The another inside photo is of ***Eve Burstein*** reading a self-selected book, courtesy of ***Mrs. Gail Grow***, her teacher.

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE AUTHORS

1. Varied manuscript formats are welcomed. Any topic related to reading/language arts is welcomed. Articles by teachers as active researchers are encouraged. Technical articles and research reports must be submitted in a writing style that is suitable for the general readership of the **Spectrum.**

2. The ***Language and Literacy Spectrum*** is a refereed journal and, therefore, the review of manuscripts is blind. Contributors must submit three copies of each manuscript with an abstract of 75-100 words. Manuscripts must be between 10-20 pages long and typed according to APA format. Author(s) should be identified on title page only. If a manuscript is accepted for the journal, contributors must submit a 3.5" floppy disk of the manuscript in WordPerfect format, for either IBM or Macintosh computer.

3. Authors are solely responsible for the accuracy of material in their article and the opinions and conclusions expressed therein. It is assumed that articles under consideration for publication in the **Spectrum** are not being considered for publication elsewhere simultaneously.

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Professional advertisements are welcomed. Although the ***Language and Literacy Spectrum*** is supported financially by the New York State Reading Association, advertisements are sold to offset **Spectrum** costs on a first-come-first-served basis. All questions concerning advertising should be directed to:

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New York State English Council – Call for Manuscripts

The New York State English Council seeks manuscripts for its monograph on teaching non-fiction in elementary, middle school, high school and college English/language arts classes. Recent interest in using non-fiction in English class is a result of several educational and social trends: non-fiction is seen as a powerful medium for teaching critical thinking; critical pedagogy finds nonfiction useful for meeting its social and political aims; the new humanities programs employ non-fiction as an interdisciplinary compromise; and the literature curriculum, influenced by semiotic theory, has embraced non-fiction and eradicated categorical distinctions between texts.

Manuscript length should be 5-15 pages and employ MLA style. Include a cover sheet with your name, mailing address and telephone. Identification should not appear elsewhere on the manuscript.

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Philip M.Anderson, Editor
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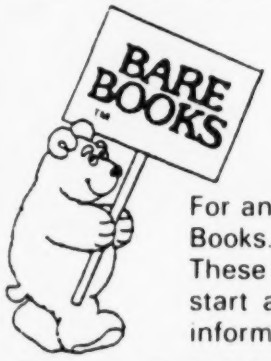

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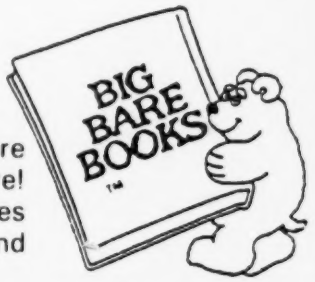

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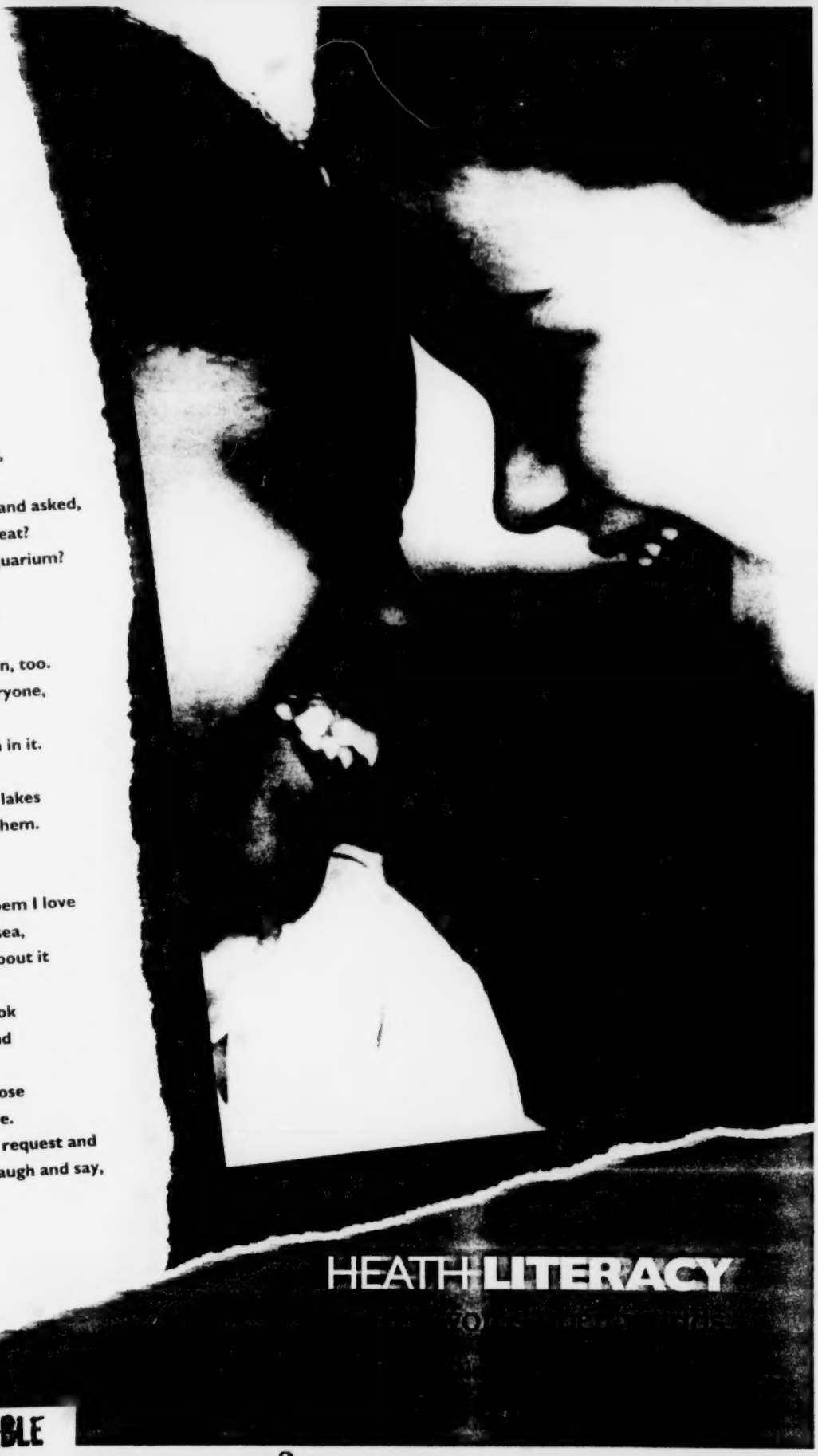
What is literacy?

The other day Samantha,
who was shy,
found a photo of an
octopus I had posted
near the fish at the back
of the room.
Samantha suddenly
came alive with purpose,
like a hungry pike who's
spotted breakfast.
She made straight for me,
took me by the hand
to the back of the room, and asked,
What is it? What does it eat?
Can we put one in the aquarium?

Samantha caught me up
in her excitement –
caught the other children, too.
So we sat together, everyone,
and talked about the
ocean – fish, ships, trash in it.
Some children looked
for bays and ponds and lakes
and what could live in them.
Some drew curly,
eight-legged things.
Later I read aloud a poem I love
about the deep, deep sea,
and everyone wrote about it
in their journals.
I gave Samantha a book
about a giant squid and
showed the others
books they could choose
to take home or share.
I drew a seahorse on request and
Samantha dared to laugh and say,
It looks
like an S, silly.

This is literacy.



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FROM THE EDITORS...

In Volume 4 of *The Language and Literacy Spectrum* colleagues from schools throughout New York State share their concerns and interests in the improvement of literacy. Major educational issues are raised which, we believe, reflect state-wide literacy concerns: appropriate, effective instruction and assessment for all of New York's children. A central thread found in many of the articles is the importance of authentic or meaningful experiences that invite the student, young and old, into the community of learners. A second strand questions many of the evaluation procedures and instruments presently used to evaluate literacy understandings.

The lead article by Connell Fraser pointedly challenges the exclusion of many special needs students among the community of learners. Inclusion is not a question of choice; it is a civil right's issue. She argues eloquently and with thoughtful reason that there are many ways to include students as contributing members of school and, ultimately, society. Dr. Fraser challenges us, as reading specialists, to lead our colleagues in opening literacy opportunities for all students.

Teachers are greatly influenced by their schooling experiences. Susan Lehr and Ruth Andrea Levinson present a model of preservice instruction which integrates curricular areas, subjects typically segmented in teacher training programs. We need classroom teachers who are highly knowledgeable about literacy and able to actively engage students in learning through all the language arts. Their article presents one innovative strategy to better prepare preservice teachers for entry in the classroom of the 90's. The use of a variety of sources and experiences to teach about Native Americans is exemplary.

Remember those childhood books that were special? Remember the people who made the stories special? Helen Lounsbury recaptures the intimacy and power of early experiences with books. Because these fond memories are the result of an adult who took the time to read with us, she argues that teachers must consciously create memories for today's students. We also believe this sharing of wonderful tradebooks is critically important for youngsters whose families can not or elect not to share books with them. We can still hear the voices of parents and teachers, long since deceased, who made the world of books alive for us.

Marni Schwartz's storytelling article again draws on the importance of remembering. What we remember offers powerful meaning to us as individuals. She maintains that stories tell who we are and, in a sense, they validate ourselves. Her respect and awe for oral literacy are beautifully shared as we journey into the woods with her. The importance of teacher modeling in storytelling is clearly made. When we were children, we delighted in retellings of favorite children's stories; often the "Big Bad Wolf" succeeded in scaring us as well as the younger neighborhood children we had intended to frighten. Now as adults and parents, we share our family stories, those stories learned without conscious intent. Storytelling is too often overlooked in classrooms and Marni Schwartz challenges us to tell our stories and to invite our students to follow our example.

Several articles take a critical look at literacy evaluation in New York State. Richard Allington maintains that the Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) comparisons are misleading because districts include children of different ages in the testing. Rather that using particular grades, he argues that it would be much more appropriate to include all students born in a particular year. With the pressure for districts to appear strong on the CAR, some decisions are made which result in artificial improvement of test scores for particular districts. As we thought about Allington's premise, we recalled the frightening data regarding retention; children who are retained are significantly more likely to drop out of school. Perhaps implementing Allington's suggestion would more clearly focus districts on their children's acquisitions of literacy and less on how well they fare when compared with neighboring school districts.

Two articles looked at writing assessment. Richard Sinatra and Jeffrey Beaudry strongly question the State's use of report writing when students have not taken the notes themselves. Their article raises the question of authenticity; how can students write a report when they do not know what led to the particular notes being selected? In their investigation they found that imagery was a much more powerful tool in helping children write reports and, furthermore, ownership for notes improved these students' writings. A major thesis underlying Peter Mosenthal's work is that evaluation should inform practice. He makes a sensible case for re-thinking instructional grouping based on children's understandings of narrative structure.

The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) tests are well known to any teacher in public education in New York State. Reva Cowan's indictment of the state's use of expository text in primary grade assessment is presented. Young children are most familiar with narrative structure and, therefore, lack of familiarity with content area reading as well as unfamiliar content combine to frustrate children and teachers alike. After a comparison of six current basal series and DRP scores, she makes a cogent argument for extreme caution in translating scores into instructional decisions. Simply stated, the DRP scores are

unlikely to be helpful in child specific decisions for instructional materials. Her call for naturalistic assessment is strongly made.

Barbara Combs portrays a snap shot view of a classroom where children are actively engaged in constructing knowledge about dinosaurs. A sense of excitement and purposeful learning are evident until the hypothetical teacher reverts to traditional paper and pencil testing. This article presents a dilemma that many teachers face in assessment. That is, how can assessment be made sensible and meaningful for teachers and children? To this end, portfolios are suggested as a way to capture children's literacy growth.

Last, but certainly not least, are book recommendations from our friend and bibliophile, Frank Hodge. It is hard to resist his book choices because he is able to capture the spirit of a book in a few well chosen words. We think of him as the Pied Piper of Children's Books and feel certain that you will also be counted among his fans! So, grab one of the great books he has recommended and let the reading begin.

KAG & PCM
February 11,1994
The Sage Colleges
Troy, NY

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

With the publication of this volume, *The Language and Literacy Spectrum* has entered the computer age. Manuscripts were submitted on disk and changes frequently completed via E-mail. These changes have allowed us to make adjustments in a more timely and interactive fashion from computer to computer. For us this has been an opportunity for literacy growth as we "chat" back and forth among colleagues across the state. Our use of technology has also reduced the publication costs of the journal itself and we believe this is an important consideration in responsible editorship.

Jane Barber Smith, President of the NYSRA, has been an active supporter of *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*. Her persuasive arguments and appeals, which initially led to our acceptance of the editorship, have been followed by wise counsel and cheerful willingness to assist in any request. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge her boundless energy and support over the past nine months as we gave "birth" to the fourth volume of the journal.

The **Editorial Review Board** has been, in a word, superb. Their efforts in timely, substantive reviews of submitted articles were consistently excellent, even when our turn around time became very short. We were impressed with their candor and expertise. Many thanks are deservedly theirs.

The Sage Colleges has underwritten a large portion of the printing costs which has resulted in the publication of significantly more copies of the journal. It is our hope that the wider readership will result in more statewide exchanges regarding literacy issues through the journal forum. **Dr. David Goldenberg**, Executive Dean, has enthusiastically encouraged the increasing visibility of the journal and we wish to express our sincere thanks.

The wonderful pictures of children engaged in literacy activities were graciously provided to us by The Doane Stuart School, a K - 12 private school located in Albany, NY and The Children's School at Emma Willard, a private early childhood school located in Troy, NY. **Dr. Edward Dougherty, Headmaster of Doane Stuart,** and **Mrs. Teresa Thayer Snyder, Director of The Children's Schoo**l, are warmly thanked for sharing photographs on very short notice. It wasn't until two weeks before publication that we requested pictures and their responsiveness is greatly appreciated. Moreover, **Gail Grow** is thanked for rescheduling a busy morning to take photographs of her second graders at The Children's School.

Behind every publication are knowledgeable, hard working, unsung wonders. We have two such persons to thank: **Carol Brazinski** and **Diane Simmons**. Their typing, editorial assistance and production expertise are reflected time and again in the quality of this journal. We thank them for their Herculean efforts and consistent smiles!

It is our hope that *The Language and Literacy Spectrum* will grow in stature and visibility. We welcome any and all comments from our readership and thank the New York State Reading Association for the opportunity to serve as editors.

KAG & PCM

Inclusion or Exclusion: No Other Choice

— *Connell Frazer*

ABSTRACT

With significant over-identification of students who are arguably "disabled", with funding that encourages restrictive placement, and a tendency to see normal variation as deficient, inclusion of students with disabilities is not simply a question of bringing students with disabilities into the regular class. Inclusion will mean assessing eligibility processes and finding structures, as well as curriculum and instructional practices. But there isn't really a choice to be made. Exclusion of persons with disabilities is no more useful a prospect than was exclusion of Native Americans, women, or persons of color. In designing inclusion programs, one of the greatest needs is to clarify the curriculum, the content that should be delivered to students with disabilities. In delivering regular or specialized curriculum to students with disabilities, reading specialists will be involved in delivering reading instruction and remediation, in teaching study skills, designing practical reading applications, and in teaching functional literacy and use of environmental print.

Inclusion is a concept that has evolved from what was known as mainstreaming and integration, practices derived from the least restrictive environment clause in Public Law 94-142. Inclusion occurs when a student with a disability attends the class and school that he/she would have attended if not disabled. The supports and services that are necessary for the child to benefit from the educational program are a part of inclusive practice.

Where did inclusion come from? Federal and state laws have long required that schools provide an education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive setting. What is different now? In 1975 when PL 94-142 was written, the problem was exclusion. Students with moderate and severe disabilities were not provided an educational program. The schools said in effect, if the child can't benefit from the program we have, stay home. The federal government remembered, with some help, the lesson learned from Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas - if a service is provided at public expense then it must be provided to all citizens. The principle of equal access translated through litigation and legislation required that students with disabilities who had previously been excluded from school were now provided educational services, but often in separate and segregated facilities.

In addition to providing education for students who had previously been excluded, federal and state law developed new designations for students who had previously not been considered disabled. Students with learning disabilities were a new group in 1975, but now comprise one-half or more of an increasing number of students. In 1985 9% of the students in New York schools were identified as disabled, one-half of those were labeled learning disabled. In 1993, 10% of the students in New York schools were identified as disabled, with those labeled learning disabled the largest disability group represented. One in 10 students is identified as disabled.

Several factors have led to what appears to be significant over-identification of students as disabled. One is the Lake Woebegone Effect where "all the women are strong, the men good-looking, and the children are above-average". We seem to expect all students to be "above average" even though it is clear that one half of any group must be "below average". In statistical terms, 16% of any group will fall one standard deviation or more below the mean. Are we willing to describe all of those students as disabled because our definition of normality requires us to measure them against "average" performance?

Another factor that has led to over-use of disability labels, especially the label of "learning disability", is the assumption that any student who has a difficulty must be disabled. In the range of human behavior, there are numbers of behaviors that are normal but troublesome or hard to deal with. If some students present a challenge in terms of management or motivation, we are faced with the difficulties that teachers have always faced: some students are harder to teach. Does that mean they have a disability? Of course not. But we do have a tendency to see any problem as a disabling condition, or we see a disability as an explanation for the troublesome behavior. Is every child who has trouble learning to read a disabled child? Or is it true that some children will find it very easy to learn to read, and some will find it very hard? Is this a question of disability, or is it one of normal variation in human behavior?

Over-identification is also related to funding structures, especially in New York. To gain support for students, the quickest, surest source of money is through the disability label. If a student who has a reading difficulty is not identified as "disabled", there are limited funds to pay for special reading instruction, even if that is what is necessary. The need for money sometimes explains the need for a label. In addition, in New York, the more segregated the placement for the student with a disability, the more money the state pays. There are financial incentives to find and label students as disabled, and there are financial incentives for isolating those students.

The people who designed the public law never meant for special education to be a growth industry. If students are not identified and excluded, then inclusion won't be

an issue. The original premise for 94-142 was to include children who had previously been excluded from services, not identify children who had always been a part of the schools.

So, if the first answer to the inclusion question is to stop labeling and isolating children whose disabilities aren't obvious, whose difficulties fall within the normal range of behavior and learning, the second part of the inclusion answer has to do with providing inclusive programs for students whose disabilities are obvious, significant. These are the students for whom PL 94-142 was written, the students who 20 years ago were not allowed to come to school.

Students with significant disabilities are most often provided programs in self-contained classes or segregated schools. These are the students whose programs are most expensive. The intensity of programs for students with severe disabilities causes a part of the increased expense, and segregation causes further expense. Providing separate facilities, separate transportation and separate administrations drives up the cost of segregated programs. But the financial structure in New York State currently allows the school districts to receive more money for students in the segregated programs than for an identical educational experience that is provided in the home school. The state reimburses the local districts at a higher rate for the more expensive programs, for the more segregated programs. The expense to New York taxpayers is, of course, greater, but less for the local district.

The funding structures must be redesigned to allow school districts to undertake inclusive programs without financial penalty.

When students with severe disabilities were first provided with educational experiences, it seemed necessary to keep them separate from the rest of us. Persons with severe disabilities had been excluded from families and communities for much of the century, often hidden away in large institutions. But the civil rights movement that provided for inclusion of persons of color, Native Americans, and women also led to inclusion of persons with disabilities. This is easily illustrated from our history:

- In Colonial New England, all white children were taught to read and write, not just children whose parents could afford to provide a public education.
  (But of course, Native Americans were not a part of this.)
- The 14th Amendment made former slaves citizens of the United States and made it possible for them to participate in education that was provided at public expense.
  (But Plessy v. Ferguson allowed separate but equal education and Native Americans were specifically excluded from the 14th Amendment.)
- In 1920, women were given the vote.
  (But laws limited women's citizenship and property rights in many states.)
- In 1954, Brown v. the Board of Education disallowed separate but equal..
  (But systematic segregation of schools continued in the South.)
- In 1964, the Civil Rights Amendment was passed and schools were integrated; systematic desegregation ended.
  (But schools in Albany, New York are still racially segregated and are more segregated than schools in Albany, Georgia. [Dougherty County Schools Court Report, October 1, 1993])
- In 1975, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act required a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities.
  (But New York's programs for children with disabilities are more segregated than every other state in the nation.)

Aside from the civil rights issue and finances, why is it important to include children with disabilities in the school programs that are provided for nondisabled students? To answer that question, it is necessary to decide why students with severe disabilities should be provided an education at all. Many of the students who are disabled in intellectual or communicative behavior or whose ability to live independently is severely impaired may not be able to pursue a diploma, the outcome of education for most students who attend school. If the outcomes are different, then why is it necessary for students with severe and lifelong disabilities to be in school? The diploma isn't in itself a useful outcome. A diploma represents for most students the achievement of ability that will allow them to become a part of some future environment: a citizen in the community, a family, a workplace, further education. For students with severe disabilities, the outcomes are the same. Students with disabilities need to learn to be members of a community, a family, the workplace, and they often need further training to accomplish vocational goals. It is to everyone's advantage if persons with disabilities grow up and assume a role in the community. It is to everyone's advantage if persons with disabilities can care for themselves, instead of having to be cared for by persons who must be paid. It is to everyone's advantage if persons with disabilities can work and pay taxes, instead of only consuming the resources that would be necessary to shelter and supervise them.

We cannot expect to put away, to isolate people with disabilities for their entire school career, from age 3 to 21, and then hope that they will join their peers as functional members of a community. Persons with disabilities must learn to interact with nondisabled persons as children and adolescents if they are to interact and function as members of a community of adults.

There are logical flaws in the current structure of special education programs for persons with disabilities. We take children who are autistic, who have severe communication and social difficulties, and put them together in a class. What are our goals for these students? We hope they will learn to communicate and socially interact in appropriate ways. Is that possible? Can they learn to converse in a group of students who all have abnormal communication patterns. Can they learn to behave properly in a group of students who all have behavior problems?

Many people are concerned about children who are aggressive. It doesn't seem wise to place students who are severely aggressive in the regular classroom because they might harm the nondisabled students. Does it seem wise to place students who are severely aggressive in a special education classroom where the only people they may harm are other students with disabilities?

We talk about "extra help" that we can provide for students with disabilities in the resource room or remedial reading class. Students with academic difficulties go to another class for an hour or two per day to get extra help. But is it extra? Does the special education student have more instructional time than other students? Or does it happen that the student with special needs goes out of the class, which is obvious to all classmates, and misses the social studies or math lesson while in the resource room? And then when that student comes back to class and fails to do well, we decide that the disability has caused the failure. Many teachers complain that with so many pull-out programs - remedial reading and math, band, resource instruction, speech - there are few times when all of the students are in the class together. There are many classroom and special teachers who have begun to "team" or collaborate to coordinate their instruction. Providing separate and different instruction, especially in basic skills such as reading and writing, may be unproductive. The advantages appear in more efficient use of students' time, "extra" help for all students not just the student with disabilities, and planned interventions that do not conflict or contradict.

There is a logical fallacy in the magic of one-to-one remediation, an assumption that anything that is done individually with the student is better than the more typically large or small group presentation. Too often, individual instruction becomes a crutch and even when students can do the work, when their academic skills have been remediated, they may not be able to do it in the regular class, without the one-to-one attention.

Given the flaws in the reasoning that have led to self-contained and segregated programs, along with the clear legal basis for inclusion in regular classes as supported by Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing programs for students with disabilities in the typical class in the home school becomes a question of how. The support and related services that are mandated in the self-contained and segregated classes must be moved into the regular class. What is the role of the specialist? How does the reading teacher address the needs of students with special needs? The teacher and aide support that has existed must be moved into the regular class. Cooperation and planning for the changes requires time for classroom teachers and special education teachers and related service providers to meet together. Extra time for planning is a key to transitioning from what has existed to what is necessary and desirable. One of the major questions that hasn't yet been clarified is the question of what to teach. What content is appropriate content for students who are to be included? How can the activities of the classroom be modified to support goals for students with disabilities when the outcomes may be different than the typical curricular outcomes?

There are 5 possible models for curriculum and therefore outcomes:

1. **Regular curriculum** - appropriate for students who need different methods of instruction or materials, or modification of testing practice. For example, students who are blind, deaf, reading disabled, or emotionally disturbed would participate in the regular curriculum, meeting the same standards as any other student. These students will earn a Regents or local diploma. The reading specialist may be involved in imposing reading strategies, working in listening comprehension or helping develop study skills.
2. **Regular curriculum with modifications** - appropriate for students for whom the content of the regular curriculum is appropriate, but for whom the standards must be modified. A student who has a severe reading disability or who is deaf may be excused from the language requirement, or a student who has a severe writing disability may be asked to produce 3 instead of 5 themes. These students will earn a Regents or local diploma. The reading specialist will be of tremendous support to students pursuing a modified curriculum. Modifying the instruction to provide the most efficient instruction is a particular challenge.
3. **Lower grade level curriculum** - appropriate for very few students and then only at the lower grades. Because in this model, there is no clear outcome, the lower grade level curriculum would not be recommended for any students except those whose rate of learning is increasing and who are judged likely to "catch up".
4. **Practical curriculum** - appropriate for students who cannot meet the standards of the regular curriculum but whose program includes related academic content, particularly basic literacy and numeracy. The focus of this curriculum is on the pragmatics of day-to-day functioning in community, workplace, and home. The outcome of this curriculum is an IEP diploma. Inclusion for these students will also mean integration into community and work activities, especially after elementary school. The reading specialist could be involved in defining the practical aspects of students' programs and designing instruction to teach use of environmental print and community referenced applications.

– Continued on page 12

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5. **Unique curriculum** - appropriate for students whose program focuses on life skills and is directly related to home, community, and workplace functioning. An IEP diploma is the outcome for these students. Much of this instruction would be provided in the community and workplace. The standards for the modified and alternative curricula will be developed in the same way they have been over the last decade; teachers, parents, and administrators will work together to determine what is reasonable, what is fair, and what best meets the needs of the student. To the same extent that functional reading is a part of the student's program, the reading specialist will be able to contribute to the student's program.

In each of the curriculum models, what is to be taught must be considered separately from how the content is to be taught. The same activities can be used to deliver instruction to meet more than one purpose. A science lesson on the life cycle of the horsefly can lead one child to write 5 features of metamorphosis while another child may copy "metamorphosis" for practice in sequencing and forming letters. A lesson on long division may be used to teach the process, or a student pursuing a practical curriculum may hold the answer key and check classmates' answers in order to practice identifying numbers.

When it is clear what needs to be taught to students with disabilities and teachers have the opportunity to plan the modifications that are necessary, and the related and support services are in place, what remains to be done? The funding structures must be redesigned to allow school districts to undertake inclusive programs without financial penalty. The disincentives for providing the least restrictive environment are impediments to the development of good programs. It has been suggested that teacher training programs will need to take into account that teachers will be working with all types of students in the regular classroom. Elementary and secondary teachers, music, art and physical education teachers will need to know more about the potential and provisions for students with disabilities. Conversely, special educators will be a part of the regular program and will need to know more about what happens in the elementary and secondary classrooms. Some of these changes are already underway. The New York State Department of Education has proposed certification changes that will require anyone who is to be certified in special education to hold concurrent certification in elementary or secondary education.

The objections raised by the New York State United Teachers and at the national level by Albert Shanker (1993), President of the American Federation of Teachers, must be addressed. Their concerns are valid ones. There is a fear that appropriate supports will not be provided to students with disabilities who are placed in regular classrooms. There is a real danger that students will be "dumped" without support. That is not inclusion. If parents and teachers and disability advocates work together, both needs can be met: the need that students with disabilities have to be provided an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment and the need that teachers have to be sure that appropriate supports and planning be provided.

The final inclusion question is not whether New York schools should include students with disabilities, but how to accomplish it in a way that benefits all students, all teachers and all schools. It will require the cooperation of all parties. Blind antagonism will not prevent inclusion; it will prevent it from being done well.

The final inclusive question is not whether New York schools should include students with disabilities, but how to accomplish it in a way that benefits all students, all teachers and all schools.

Dr. Connell Frazer, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director in Education at The Sage Colleges, is a frequent speaker and consultant on effective inclusion. She recommends the following text to inform readers about inclusion: *Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools.* Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing Co.

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Thematic Learning: A classroom model

— Susan Lehr and Ruth Andrea Levinson

From decades of research we now know that learning in a transactional classroom, with the construction of meaning as the driving philosophy, is a powerful way in which to engage learners (Cambourne, 1988; Weaver, 1990). Learners who take charge of their own learning in guided and supportive contexts face challenges rarely taken by children who are spoonfed material in teacher dominated classrooms. These children also understand at tacit levels that they must take responsibility for acquiring knowledge, thus setting the stage for independent learning.

Children are natural learners. As they explore their worlds they acquire language by constructing meaning in social contexts (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). As adults scaffold, children constantly construct, explore, and refine language. Literacy emerges in a similar fashion as children are immersed in oral and written contexts which shape their views toward print and knowledge (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; 1989). Effective communication is learned within cultural and social contexts which involve active learning and participation (Vygotsky, 1978).

Ironically, as children get older, the transmission model is widely accepted in post elementary classrooms and is based on the use of lecture, overheads, and a passive model of learning. By the time students reach our college classrooms they are often passive, expect boredom, and demand that we spoonfeed them information. All too frequently this is exactly what they get. What happens to this natural curiosity which young learners have about the world? How can we as teachers plug up the gaps between the constructive learners who enter our classrooms and the passive learners who leave them?

It is our intention to tell you what we do in our classrooms at the preservice college level. If you are an elementary classroom teacher you might wonder why you should keep reading. We'd challenge you to continue reading on three counts. The first premise is that our teaching is based on large bodies of research which inform all teaching and have significance for all learners. We like to think of this transactional learning process as an ageless one (Bruner, 1960; Dewey, 1938; Duckworth, 1987; Mitchell, 1971; Piaget, 1952, 1954; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Pratt, 1948). We are constantly astounded at the wealth of learning in which we engage with our students. Not surprisingly, they too are astounded that we perceive ourselves as life long learners.

The second premise is that we'd like to share our Native American theme which lasts four full days and is the model upon which we base our entire "Junior Block" of learning. We refer to the knowledge and contexts for learning shaped during this experience continually over the course of a year. The Native American unit which we have developed over four years is a powerful learning experience for our students and is often the catalyst for their elementary classroom teaching.

The third premise is that some teachers have felt disconnected from what occurs in college preservice classrooms. Some have expressed to us that they feel they have missed out on these new ways of teaching, while others have suggested that there is a large gap between the real world of the elementary classroom and what we do in the college classroom. The not so subtle message is that we are not teachers and that we are too far removed from reality. As teachers we believe that the links between the elementary classroom and the college classroom are vital and need to be strengthened. We each exist with the other. Both contexts inform and are responsible for shaping how learning occurs. We have many strong connections with teachers in our geographical area based on mutual respect and a wide variety of innovative research and shared learning connections. To that end, we invite you to explore how we initiate our students into holistic and integrated learning contexts.

One of our core beliefs is that preservice teachers must experience the learning situations in which they will later function in the elementary classroom.

Whole Language at the College Level?

What is the essential core of our philosophy toward learning? We are both college teachers in an education department which strongly advocates a "hands on" approach to learning. We both have taught and continue to teach in elementary schools, although the bulk of our teaching is at the college level. Our holistic philosophy informs and directly impacts on our teaching as we challenge our students to construct and to participate in their own thematic learning. The result is that they experience the value, the excitement, the ownership, the connections, and the richness of the possibilities for learning in the classroom. For many this is a first time experience. For many, the experiences in this preservice program are the basis for a growing commitment to and an evolving belief system in an integrated approach to teaching which effectively translates into practice in the elementary classroom. The students not only see the possibilities for dynamic learning through a study of research and theory, they directly experience a holistic and thematic approach to learning, as we did in our graduate studies.

One of our core beliefs is that preservice teachers must

experience the learning situations in which they will later function in the elementary classroom. Studies in psychology suggest that individuals tend to teach or parent in the way that they themselves were taught or raised. Modeling is a powerful influence on behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986). During the "Junior Block" we see our students three full days each week of the semester. During that time the teachers in the Education Department team teach, plan and coordinate a series of learning experiences which model a holistic and integrated approach to teaching and learning. Without the modeling the inclination of our students is to teach as they have been taught. Not surprisingly, the majority of our students come from transmission based classrooms.

What is the "Junior Block?"

Prior to the Spring semester of the junior year in college our students have taken foundational courses in child development, reading and language arts, issues in school and society, mathematical concepts, American studies, and children's literature in addition to their other liberal studies requirements. In the Spring semester of the junior year, education majors enroll in the "Junior Block" where they are registered for three preprofessional courses: Teaching Reading in the Elementary School, Teaching and Instruction: Methods and Materials in Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, and Practicum in Teaching and Instruction. When students enroll in the "Junior Block," they take each of these courses for one full day (8:00 am- 4:00 pm) a week. Time is "blocked out" (in contrast to typical hourly college class or lab times) and thus the name "Junior Block" has evolved. The three courses have separate instructors who are specialists in their fields and separate curricular content. In "Junior Block" we weave out and in from our separate content areas to model, as a department, cooperative and integrated teaching. We return to our separate courses to develop depth in the specific content areas.

Our first four days of "Junior Block" are devoted to an immersion experience in thematic learning. All instructors collaboratively plan and teach in this four day exploration. For the past four years we have used the very broad theme "Native Americans."

Day One: Brainstorming and a plan of attack

The students come in with a high level of anticipation. They have heard rumors about "Junior Block." They expect something distinctly different from normal teaching and also expect to be overwhelmed with coursework. We begin by having students brainstorm what they know, what they don't know, and what they want to learn about Native Americans. Oral language is critical in this model of learning. Students learn immediately that what they have to say is valued. By framing this discussion in a heuristic mode, the message is that questions are as important as answers. This brainstorming web is recorded on the board and transferred to a large sheet of paper for later reference to webbing (See Figure 1.).

As the students help us organize the questions and statements into conceptual groups such as religious beliefs, relationship with nature, government, educational methods, rituals and festivals, stories and legends, shelter and clothing, economy, our web begins to take form. With these categories established, the students form research groups of 3 to 5 students. Resources have been previously gathered and set up on tables and are available for students to research their questions throughout the experience. They include primary sources, biographies, historical fiction, nonfiction, folktales, maps, videos, government documents, and photographic essays. Over the next four days students will have large segments of time to research their topics, to organize the information gleaned, and to prepare their group's presentation and display of material.

On the first day it is essential that teachers move among groups facilitating the focus for research, recommending resources, and suggesting possible presentation formats (e.g., performing a dramatic scene, storytelling, use of artifacts accompanied by narrative, use of comparison charts, timelines, maps, craft or cooking activity, song and dance demonstration, etc.).

In earlier experiences with groupwork we found that quality was an issue, and could be quite uneven. Early input and guidance ensured that our learners would challenge themselves sufficiently. We also found that sitting in and listening as plans were made offered tacit support and helped keep groups focused. Many of our students have had negative experiences working in groups. Complaints have ranged from "I did all the work," "We accomplished nothing, " to "This is a waste of time." Ideally the ideas should come from the students, but that does not always happen. We have no problems with directing groups along a particular path if they seem to be floundering. Our ultimate aim is that they will take responsibility for their own learning as well as take note of the ways in which quality group work is fostered.

Evidence or posing of a mathematical problem must also be included in the presentation. For example, a math problem was acted out in one skit which involved the preparation for a wedding feast. The family's corn bread recipe had to be multiplied to feed the wedding guests. Another example involved calculating the distance and time needed to travel from the winter camps to the summer camps for the Kiowa. In still another situation, students posed a supply problem based on the dimensions and materials needed to build a long house for a family and their animals.

Interspersed throughout the "work periods" in the four days are continued models of hands-on, integrated learning experiences (See Figure 2 for schedule.). After brainstorming and forming research groups we engage the students in group warm-up, cooperative team building exercises, taken from The Collaborative Classroom (1990). These are conducted in preparation for learning to work in groups and learning about group processes. The students are then ready to begin gathering information. This brief period before lunch allows students to browse through materials. Finding the appropriate resources is a time consuming and noisy process.

Following lunch, we begin with sustained silent reading (SSR) of the novel *Sweetgrass*, by Jan Hudson. We have purchased 29 copies and use the books specifically during this time. The book is occasionally used in a children's literature class, but we find that rereading a well written book is not a drawback. We are not territorial about the use of books for our courses. *Sweetgrass* is the story of a young Blackfoot girl who lives in Alberta, Canada, near the Montana border in 1838. She is a spunky and resourceful character who ends up saving the lives of her family during a smallpox epidemic which occurs during a harsh winter. The book has been authentically researched and reflects life in a Plains Indian tribe in the early part of the Nineteenth Century.

After a 30 minute SSR the students are given extended writing assignments for their journals. The assigned journal writing includes five different possibilities: writing entries about scenes from the perspective of *Sweetgrass* and then from the perspective of her brother, detailing information about the roles of women, considering Sweetgrass' conflicting views of her place in the tribe based on excerpts from the text, exploring information learned about the customs and economy of the Blackfoot, and writing the next chapter of the book from the perspective of one of the main characters. (See Figure 3 for assigned journal questions.) Many of the students borrow the books and finish reading them before the next class meeting. Journal entries are shared in small groups, where a lively discussion of the book usually follows.

At the end of the first day each group outlines a plan of action. What and how will they research their topic? How will they organize their information? Of what will their final presentation consist? We also ask them to write this information down on paper as an informal contract.

Day Two: Visit to a tipi and more research

The second day begins with a field trip to Buffalo Days, a tipi in the woods about thirty minutes from campus. Our field trip always takes place in the dead of winter when there is snow on the ground and it is bitterly cold! We are greeted at the entry to the woods by Al and Minga Hoerauf. He is dressed as a trapper from the mid-1800's and she wears the traditional garb of her Comanche people. The tipi is set in the woods, far away from the noise of the highway. It is easy to believe that we are stepping out of time because the tipi is authentically constructed, except that it is made of treated cotton tarp instead of hides. As we enter the tipi Al begins to make a fire using friction and a tiny nest of fine wood. Slowly the sparks ignite the wood pile that Minga is laying. These tasks and roles were typically assumed by men and women in the Plains Indians' culture. As we recover from the biting cold, Al talks about the making and the use of the various artifacts in the tipi: horsehair rope, buffalo bladder water container, cured deerskin robe, bone and knuckles game, hoop and stick game, cured buffalo hides, and the tipi itself. Al is wearing a raccoon hat, Hudson blanket robe, a quiver and arrows (all handmade), a buffalo hide shield, buffalo shoes, a necklace of shells. Minga wears lighter beaded moccasins and a beaded robe, and has various knives and tools and pouches attached to her waist.

The fire, the setting, the artifacts and Al's retelling of the history and culture of the Plains Indians through the use of the artifacts draw us all back to a time and place we've never been. Afterward, sitting in the tipi the students process silently by writing in their journals. They are amazed at how much they have learned through Al's storytelling and description of the artifacts. For the first time in "Junior Block" they begin to see the natural learning process at work. They also begin to develop thoughtful questions related to their own research. Students are deeply moved by the spiritual, respectful, scientific, and ingenious relationship between these people and the natural world about them. Later during processing time, the value of constructing a meaningful field trip to support, develop, or culminate learning is discussed. Always, we are amazed at the transforming effect upon our students after sitting in that cold tipi, waiting for the sparks to start the fire (literally and figuratively).

When we return to campus, we lunch together with warm herbal tea (ingredients: slippery elm bark, licorice root, wild cherry bark, fennel seed, cinnamon bark, orange peel, althea root) while listening to Navajo flute music by R. Carlos Nakai "Desert Dance" (1990). These materials demonstrate simply how one can create ambiance in the classroom and access genuine props. This also models the importance of food and music in learning about economics, culture, and aesthetics of different cultures. Later, a Cahuilla bird song is taught and practiced with accompanying movements — learning through all the senses. Similarly, *The Rough-Face Girl*, a Native American Cinderella version retold by Rafe Martin (1992), is read aloud to the group on this day so that they can experience the impact of reading aloud. We find that our students never tire of listening to stories read aloud. While modeling effective read aloud techniques and good literature our students also access new titles to use in their own classrooms.

Day Three: Weavers, more research, and native peoples today

On Friday, we continue to provide the students with varied learning experiences about different groups of Native Americans that punctuate their group research work. We read an excerpt from Marriott's *The Ten Grandmother's: Epic of the Kiowas*, (1945) about the education of Kiowa children in the late 1800s. Many of those forced schools were operative well into this century. For most it is still another shock when Grass Stem emerges from the school with his braids cut, his special clothing and silver earring removed. He now looks like all the other students, dressed in a skirt and pants and big shoes which cover his whole foot. Even his name has been safely tucked away. He is now Stanley Hunt.

In the weaving workshop, we utilize a local artist's expertise. The session is introduced with a slide presen-

tation on the development of Navajo weaving and designs. Next we initiate a whole group discussion about *Sweetgrass*. As students share troubling, controversial, poignant, and favorite parts of the story we invite them to refer to their journals and extract several lines which reflect a meaningful response to the book. A three foot long strip of paper is written which will be woven into a giant Sweetgrass tapestry. The contrast between Sweetgrass' life in 1838 is a startling contrast to the life of Grass Stem in 1883. This weaving will hang in our room during the semester.

As the day progresses students continue to research and finalize plans for their presentations on Monday. In the afternoon we show a video entitled "Navajo Moon," which provides a current look at the lives of three children living on the 25,000 square-mile reservation in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Day Four: Basket making and group presentations

Utilizing the expertise of people around us, we invite a member of our department to give a one hour informational demonstration on the art of basket weaving. The students practice weaving a basket as the teacher gives them background information and shows them several basic techniques.

We use a mix of experts, as in the tipi visit, weaving presentation and basket demonstration, even as we jump in and learn with the students through singing, movement activities, and the making of corn husk dolls. Our own shortcomings and struggles to learn new skills signal to our students that we are all constantly learning new material. One of their ongoing worries is that there is so much content to know before going out into the elementary classroom. They see veteran teachers talk about magnets, electricity, and the Industrial Revolution off the tops of their heads and experience many feelings of inadequacy, not realizing that one learns new content constantly.

The group presentations are the measure of the success of the workshop. We are constantly amazed at the energy and resourcefulness of our students. Food, music, movement, storytelling, dramatic simulations, written materials, and the creation of artifacts are used to convey information to the class. Many students have never presented in front of a group before and are not comfortable at the prospect. This is only the first of many such experiences. That they present within a group context in a culminating and supportive experience makes the sharing successful. They learn about individual roles and interactions within the group process, while at the same time observing the shortcomings of the group process. They learn from each other about what elements contribute to the quality of a presentation. We leave time for discussion, questions, and positive feedback about each presentation.

Closure: Making the vital connections between theory and practice

The last task on Monday is to generate a discussion of what the students experienced during the four day workshop. How did they feel as learners? What did they learn about teaching? Students' observations include an enjoyment of this way of learning. It was active. They felt important and respected. They could make choices, concentrate on areas of interest, and learn new information about topics that others studied. They liked having the opportunity to work with peers in a relaxed and informal setting. Some students discovered that they like to work alone within the group and that cooperative groups can accommodate this preference. Students realized how much they learned on several levels. First they learned much about a diverse group of people who are clumped under the heading: Native Americans. Second, in a metacognitive fashion, they learned about learning.

Students express a preference for the integration of subject areas in thematic learning rather than subject area learning...

For the first time most of these students took a systematic look at how learners learn. We then explored how teachers teach. What type of environment did we set up over the course of four days? What type of planning was involved? What materials did we need to gather? What type of information did we have to possess? What were our roles during the research periods? Did we sit on the sidelines, drink coffee, and talk about skiing? Were we intrusive? Did we dominate? What was the role of direct instruction? We explore and examine all facets of this powerful learning experience. We are also willing to talk about things we missed, things we might do differently in the future. The evaluation of the experience is complete.

We talk about the theoretical basis for brainstorming and webbing thematic units and of what our goals and objectives consist. We discuss our assessment techniques of their learning, while contrasting these methods with traditional forms of testing and quizzing students to make sure they learned something. The discussion also includes a consideration of classroom management, group problem-solving and sharing, clear expectations for products, time frames, guidelines for behavior related to work, collaborative decision-making, and the constant interjection of humor and laughter.

Finally, we ask what subjects they studied. How did the content areas weave together to form an integrated experience? Usually this is a new connection for the students, because they realize that they have covered concepts, skills, and knowledge in social studies, history, science, reading and language arts, mathematics, the expressive arts, and social relationships. Students express a preference for the integration of subject areas in thematic learning rather than subject area learning that yields a discretely labeled and artificially separated curriculum. With the Native American workshop as a common foundational experience about teaching, learning, curriculum, and evaluation, instruction within language arts, social

studies, math and science continues. The holistic framework has been established for future integrated learning experiences.

Susan Lehr is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Education Department at Skidmore College. Ruth Andrea Levinson is an Assistant Professor in the Education Department at Skidmore College.

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Figure 1 – Sample Web of Native Americans

Books for Children

Knots on Counting Rope
Beyond the Ridge
13 Moons on a Turtles Back
Buffalo Woman
A River Ran Wild
SweetGrass
The Legend of Blue Grass
Hunters of the Buffalo
Hunters of the Ice
The Sioux
The Pawnee
The Iroquois

Shelter

Tipi
Longhouse
Wigwam
Pueblo
Igloo
Cliff dwelling
Houses of Bark, smow, skin

Society

Governance
Roles
Occupations
Waging war
Harvesting and planting
Child rearing
Schooling/training

Drama

A council meeting
Trade between whites and native people
Going to a reservation school
Arrival of missionaries
Games: predator
vine, circle & stick
lacrosse
foot races
leaf & seed matching

Relationship with Nature

Stories of making of the world, the sky and the animals
Hunting and fishing techniques
Use of animals for food, clothing, shelter and work
Respect for animals
Identification with animals -names & prayers
Animal tracking
Knowledge of plants & herbs, medicines, teas and foods

Religion

Festivals
Dances, songs, prayers
birth & death rituals
Gods
Superstitions
Medicine & science

Native Americans

Ways and Means of Travel

Boat, foot, dog
Routes on maps - relief maps
Technology of transportation
Reasons for movement
Gatherings

Meal Preparations

Teas
corn recipes
Squash
Beans
Storage of food
Separating kernels for husk
Grinding for flower

Crafts

Basketmaking
leather preparation & sewing
Weaving wool
Corn husk dolls
Cradleboard
Bead & Quill books
carding wool
making arrows, spears, digging sticks
patterns

Planting & harvesting

Growing seeds of plants
Seet art
Identification of roots, plants & trees

Mapping

Location of tribes before and after 1800's
Migration routes
Calculating distances
Mileage per season

History

Origins of first Native Americans
Settlement of different tribes
Life in the 1700's, 1800's & 1900's
Treaties & disputes
Wars among Native American and whites
Life on reservations
Time lines
Modern disputes

Field Trips

Buffalo Days
Nature walks
Albany Museum
Indian Burial Mound

Resource Books

Corn is Maize
The 10 Grandmothers
Memories of Sweetgrass
Indian Corn of the Americans
Rethinking Columbus
Hunters of the Eastern Forest

Figure 2 – Junior Block four day schedule

Native American Workshop

Monday
Brainstorming - Web
Organize & Select Research Groups
Group Exercise/Builder
Group Research
Lunch
SSR Sweetgrass & Extended Writing
Group Research
Wrap-up - Share Group Plan of
Action + Embedded Mathematical Problem

Wednesday
Tipi field trip with journal entry
Bag lunch in classroom accompanied
by herbal tea & Navajo Flute music
Process Tipi experience
Read aloud folktale Rough Face Girl
Group Research
Learn Cahuilla song Powama accompanied by flute

Friday
Weaving Workshop
Read aloud "Going Away" The Ten Grandmothers
Group Research
Lunch
"Navajo Moon" video
Group Research

Monday
Basket Weaving Workshop
Group Presentations begin
Lunch
Group Presentations Closure - making the connections
to teaching/learning

Figure 3 – Assigned journal writing for Sweetgrass

1. From the chapters that you have read in Sweetgrass, what have you learned about the customs, manners, and expectations for a young Blackfoot woman ? Write about your reactions to what you have read.

2. Write the next chapter in Sweetgrass as you think it might unfold. Write it from one of the main character's perspectives.

3. What have you learned about the Blackfoot tribe's economy and lifestyle? What questions do you have about the way that the Blackfoot live that are still unanswered? Write about your reactions to what you have read.

4. Write about how Sweetgrass might resolve the following conflict:

   "A good Blackfoot girl is always obedient, quiet, hard-working, and she never says what she feels." (p. 12)

   "I would find the signs, the power to control my own days. I would make my life be what I wanted." (p. 16)

   Predict what you think might happen to Sweetgrass.

5. Choose two different points in the story and write journal entries from Sweetgrass' point of view. Write about the same two scenes from her brother's point of view.

Yesterday's Children: Implications for Today and Tomorrow

— *Helen M. Lounsbury*

ABSTRACT

Using a survey to examine adults' memories of early reading, this article chronicals insights on the importance of the social context of reading. That is, the intimacy of the experiences appears more powerful than the content of the literature. Implications for classroom instruction are given.

As I look back over my teaching career, I realize that one of the underlying tenets of my educational philosophy is that books make a life-long difference. Jean-Jacques Rouseau wrote in The Confessions (1781):

> *I know nothing of myself till I was five or six. I do not know how I learnt to read. I only remember my first books and their effects upon me; it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence.*

When I first read this quote I felt a start of recognition. "My feelings exactly," I thought. I, too, could never remember a time I couldn't read. My first memory of being read to is at age three, sitting on my grandfather's lap. My white-haired grandfather was tall, wore a three piece blue serge suit and smoked a pipe; I remember him tapping his pipe as he read. He had come to America from Ireland as a young man but still retained an Irish lilt to his voice. He read to me from a book of Irish fairy tales. My overwhelming sense was one of warmth and love. I had, for as long as I could recall, been mesmerized by the printed word. It mattered not whether the words were on the back of a cereal box or a caption in a Superman comic book. For me the printed word was, and is, the wellspring, the touchstone of my existence.

For me the printed word was, and is, the wellspring, the touchstone of my existence.

Did others share this feeling? Did particular childhood books have a long term influence on adults, and if so, what are the implications for the classroom?

To answer these questions I surveyed one-hundred adults – yesterday's children. Some of the responses were in writing, others were the result of personal interviews. Each of the respondents was asked the following questions:

- What is the first book (or books) you remember reading or having read to you?
- What do you think made this book (or books) memorable for you?
- Please describe the circumstances in which you read or heard this book. (Who read or gave it to you? Where and when did you read or hear it, etc.)
- As you see it, what, if any, long term influence has this book had on your life? Please elaborate.
- About how old were you when you read or heard these books?
- Where did you live at the time? (town, state, country)
- How would you describe the above location? (rural, urban, etc.)
- Was English the native language spoken in your childhood home? If not, please elaborate.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their gender and age within ranges. Additionally, they were given an opportunity to comment in any way they saw fit. Here are the books that "yesterday's children" remembered. In some cases only the title was cited whereas in others the name of a series or a favorite author was given. Many people cited the genre of fairy tales. I have listed the most common responses or titles in parentheses.

A cloth book of animals
Aesop's Fables
Alice in Wonderland
Bible stories
Enid Blyton books
The Bobbsey Twins series
The Box Car Children series
Charlotte's Web by E. B. White
Children's encyclopedias
Christy by Catherine Marshall
Beverly Cleary books
Curious George
Dick & Jane (Scott Foresman, basal readers)
The Dutch Twins
Fairy Tales: [The Three Bears, Momotaro (Little Peach Boy), Little Red Riding Hood, The Tinder Box, Snow White, Cinderella, The Three Little Pigs, etc.]
The Five Little Peppers series
Hans Brinker or The Silver Skates
The Happy Hollister series
The Hardy Boys series

Carolyn Haywood books
Heidi
Jane Eyre
"Little Golden Books": most notably The Pokey Puppy and Little Pee Wee
Little Women
Nancy Drew series
Nursery rhymes
Peter Rabbit
Dr. Seuss books: most notably Green Eggs and Ham and The Cat in the Hat
Short Stories for Short People by Danforth
The Story of Ping
Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
The Three Investigators series
Tom Swift series
Trumpet of the Swans by E. B. White
Laura Ingalls Wilder books: most notably Little House in the Big Woods
The Wizard of Oz
WW II books (ex. 30 Seconds Over Tokyo)
The Yearling by Marjorie Rawlings

Third graders, Akintunde Akinjiola and Anna Newton, enjoy a literacy discussion with their teacher, Mrs. Susan Faith.

The people surveyed came from as far away as Findley, NSW, Australia and as close by as my next-door neighbor. The participants were selected at random. I distributed handouts at area stores, restaurants and schools. I sent forms to the University of Hawaii where my mentor was instructing a course. I approached people at public meetings, picnics, and conferences.

As I began to tabulate the results, I realized I had a wide geographic distribution: 10% of the respondents were from foreign countries — Sweden, Ireland, Australia, Canada, England and Wales; 10% were from Hawaii; 30% from the west coast; 30% from the North East; and the remaining 20% from the rest of the U.S.A.

As to age, there was a fairly even distribution in each of the categories: 22% (20-30), 23% (30-40), 21% (40-50), 16% (50-60) and 18% (over 60). In the area of gender, however, the distribution was very uneven with 70% of the respondents identified as female. It must also be noted that 55% of the respondents identified occupations (past or present) associated with education. Others were in construction, service industries, finance, banking, medicine, etc. I would estimate that approximately 75% of the sample had completed an undergraduate degree and of those 10% had earned doctorates. To my surprise it rapidly became evident that age, gender, occupation and education were not of any real significance. Irrespective of these categories, most people (55%) chose a fairy tale as their most remembered story.

A female college professor (age 50-60) who chose Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs commented, "The story was sad for a 5 year old. I was heartbroken when Snow White ate the poison apple. I had never heard of anything so sad." She added, "My uncle who was ten years older then I read it to me."

On the other hand, a 75 year-old country innkeeper from upstate New York instantly responded, "Peter Rabbit." When pressed as to why he had chosen that story he said, "I don't know. I just liked it. I remember that every night Mama would read it to my sister and me. I can still hear her voice and remember the words as if it were yesterday." A 90 year-old rural homemaker made the same choice and recounted a similar tale. The only difference was that "Papa" had been the story reader. She elaborated that he read to her nightly and that during the day they read the newspaper together. Peter Rabbit was also the choice of a female research associate (40-50) from Kansas. In response to why the story was memorable she responded simply, "A combination of having my mother read it to me, and my complete involvement with the story. I can still see the story in my mind." She added thoughtfully, "In addition to encouraging my interest and enjoyment in reading, it encouraged me to read to my daughter at a very early age — about a month! I thought it was so silly to do that, but she loves reading now."

A bilingual educational specialist from Illinois identified The Wizard of Oz and Alice in Wonderland. What made the stories memorable? She said, "...the story, the characters, the exciting events and adventures." Then she smiled and added nostalgically, "I also loved the wonderful pictures I could make in my mind as my mother read the stories. Mother read the stories to me at bedtime ... when I was about 4 or 5."

Yet another female teacher (40-50) from Honolulu chose The Tinder Box, a fairy tale. Why? "I think I really enjoyed my mother reading the various fairy tales. It enabled me to fantasize about far away places and having magical adventures."

When the question about a first remembered story was posed to a computer coordinator, she instantly responded The Three Little Pigs and proceeded to demonstrate her "pig face." Queried as to the circumstances under which she had first heard the tale she commented it was too long ago to remember and added flippantly, "It did have a long term influence. Now, I only live in brick houses! (Ha! Ha!)".

A few weeks later she contacted me and sheepishly told a story recounted by her mother. As a young child her grandmother had told her the story of the three little pigs over and over, part of the ritual was making "a pig face." In fact, it was the only way she would hold still for her mother to comb her hair into long curls each morning.

Yet another upstate New York teacher chose Fifty Famous Fairy Tales. "I enjoyed the way my sister read it to me. She would change her voice with the mood of the story — scary, sad, happy ... when I was able to read on my own, I tried to do it the same way — it makes the reading go by quickly."

Time after time, the fairy tale lovers described or cited a loved one reading the story, usually at bedtime. The individual story appeared to be a comparatively small part of the response. What of other genres? Which was more important, the tale or the circumstances under which it was told?

A school board member (30-40) raised in St. Louis cited Uncle Wiggly Tales and Uncle Remus as her favorite. "... my grandfather held me on his lap and read this to me when I visited," she explained. "When he died the 'thing' I got was his book."

During an interview in his kitchen a thirty-five year-old elevator repairman unhesitatingly responded, "Green Eggs and Ham! My mom read it to me. Pretty soon I knew it by heart." He grinned and looked at his boys seated around the table, "I read it to them, too." Then without hesitation they began to recite the book from memory in unison.

A twenty year-old student at the University of Hawaii recalled "a trick book with a collection of Disney stories. This collection was memorable," he said, "because it was my initial introduction to the imagination. An entirely different world was created, I believe it also helped establish a bond with my father at an early age. My father would read me a story before sleep at night."

Author Bruce Coville confesses that the Tom Swift series was his favorite and shares how his dad, a travelling salesman, read him the first book during a brief hiatus at home. He also noted that as an author, he models his own writing style after this series.

A 35 year-old postal worker relives the first time he heard his favorite, The Story of Ping. It was read on TV by a media loved-one, Captain Kangaroo.

A college professor recalls Charlotte's Web as his first remembered book. He speculates that the book was made memorable for him because the animals took on human form and he comments, "I grew up on a farm, so animals were always more than beasts." He adds, "My mother read it to me when I was in kindergarten or first grade... always in the evening before going to bed." Another fan of Charlotte's Web, a teacher who had been one of my former fourth grade students provided me with a personally touching response. "You know my most remembered book, or you should, because you read it to me! I still remember how the whole class, you included, cried when Charlotte died. I've read it many times since both to my children and to my students."

A mother (30-40), who recently returned to graduate school, identifies The Bobbsey Twins as her most memorable book because the main characters (Freddy and Flossy) were "my age." The circumstances? "My mother read me a chapter each evening at bedtime." Another homemaker also chose The Bobbsey Twins series which she borrowed from the library. She recalls that the twins did fun things and had adventures. The fact that there were two sets of twins made the books even more exciting to her. She remembered that her mother read to the family every night between supper dishes and bedtime and usually left off reading at a carefully chosen place "... so we would want to find out what happened next."

An elderly waitress smiled when asked her most remembered story. "Heidi," she answered wistfully. "As a young child I was in an auto accident and confined to a wheel chair for several years. Mother read me some of the story each day. Then I read it on my own. I felt as if I was running through the mountains with Heidi. Clara gave me hope. I have reread the book many times since. I still find comfort in books."

A college professor remembers Hans Brinker or The Silver Skates. She comments, "My mother read this book to my brother and me one winter — after we finished our homework. ... As my mom read about the life of Hans Brinker as he skated the canals of Holland, I tried to visualize what life in that faraway country would be like. Being a farm girl in Illinois I never dreamed that someday I would visit that far away country. Many years later, as an adult, I did visit Holland! Those memories of my youth came flooding back to me. In particular I recalled the memories of my mom reading to us. Later, I read to my son. Now that I teach college students I continue to read to them, too."

An elementary ESL teacher from New Hampshire recalls an early set of children's encyclopedias and states, "I think my serving in the U.S. Peace Corps and getting an MA in geography can be linked to this childhood experience."

A Nancy Drew fan, turned recreation director, says she is a mystery reader to this day. " I have also always been a deductive thinker. Either that is the reason I enjoyed the mystery stories or they helped sharpen deductive thinking."

A twenty-two year-old teacher from the state of Washington remembers The Boxcar Children, a book which was read to him by his teacher. He adds, "When I think of reading to my class, I think of this book."

In summarizing, people listed the following long-term influences:

- life-long reader
- read aloud to their own children/students
- value books
- choice of occupation
- choice of name for offspring
- general attitudes, beliefs and expectations
- model for their own writing
- find comfort and adventure in books

In a handful of cases, the respondents recalled no early memory of books. A Honolulu teacher (40-50) made the following representative response, "Reflecting back on my early years, I have come to realize that my exposure to literature has not been very positive. Most of what I

can recall in school, although very hazy, was based on readers not literature, stories, per se. I'm still not much of a reader." Indeed, the group with no early memories of stories or books were unanimous in noting that even today they don't read much. The educators in the group admitted they don't have enough time to read to their students due to curricular pressure.

When I began this survey I felt that certain books evoked powerful responses which made them remembered over the course of a lifetime. As an educator I had incorporated this belief into my teaching. I had always believed that a child would be turned on to reading if I could just connect them with "the right book." The "right" book for many of those surveyed was a book which had become familiar as the result of constant oral repetition. The "right" book appears to be one with predictable schemes of rhyme and rhythm as in Dr. Seuss, or predictable characters and plot as in the series books.

However, as I received my survey results this belief was shaken. In every case where a respondent recalled a book, the real power of the memory appeared to be in the circumstances associated with the book. In almost every case the book was part of a daily "reading aloud" ritual. The reader was usually a loved one. In some cases the reader was a teacher, librarian, or even a T.V. personality, but in every case the "reader" was a part of the child's daily life.

...the real power of the memory... was part of a daily "reading aloud" ritual.

A research associate (40-50) raised in rural Missouri epitomizes the way in which many described what made the book memorable.

> *"... the people who read the books to me and my brother... We asked (ages 3 & 4) to have Little Pee Wee read over and over by all relatives. We knew the book by heart and also realized it was a (extended) family joke because the readers all knew the book by heart also and would beg in the most dramatic terms not to have to read it again. Five Little Peppers was one of the books mother or dad read part of each night at bedtime. I remember the beleaguered Mrs. Pepper was always serving cold boiled potatoes to her children and my mother wondered aloud why she didn't change her schedule and cook them before a meal so they'd be warm at least one meal."*

The "who" was an important part of the hook, so was the "where" as noted in this comment by a young kindergarten teacher reminiscing about her love of The Happy Holister series.

> *"It was a gift to my sister from my grandfather. A new book came in the mail each month or so. I was the little sister, but I can remember how excited I was that I could read them too. When a new book came, my sister got to read it first, but then came my turn. I remember in one book it said 'c'mon' and I had to ask my mother what the word was."*

As to circumstance, she had this to say:

> *"I always read in my bedroom laying on the bed. Once I started a book I didn't want to do anything else. I also used to read during class time by putting the book I wanted to read inside of my text book. I only got caught sometimes."*

Many of "yesterday's children" made note of the warm comfortable surroundings in which stories were shared whether it be before bedtime, after school recess, in a library, laying on a bed, or in what one woman described as a home where "... my father had 2,000 books in the house and was always reading." The most important ingredient in memorable reading experiences appears to be not the "what" or "when" but rather "the where" and perhaps, most importantly the "who." It appears that it is important for the child to be part of a community of readers.

What implications does this survey of "yesterday's children" have for the teacher of today's children or the children of tomorrow? The survey strongly suggests that teachers need to know the children in their classrooms and care about them. This knowing and caring can be demonstrated through reading: teachers reading aloud to the entire class; other adults coming into the classroom to read aloud to the children; children reading aloud to each other; children reading silently to themselves; and parents reading with their children. In this way a community of readers can be developed among children, teachers, parents and other adults.

Within my classroom I have provided a library that includes everything from cookbooks to classics. This library caters not only to a diverse range of reading tastes and interests but also to an equally wide range of reading levels. I have also brought in a diverse group of community "guest readers," everyone from the lettercarrier to the school secretary. One of the most successful events was an evening "read-in" where students, parents, grandparents and other family members came together, broke bread and shared excerpts from favorite stories and poems.

Other ways teachers can provide a print rich environment for their students can include: developing classroom reading centers, working with librarians, participating in book clubs and allowing children to both share and discuss books they themselves have read.

Perhaps by listening to the children of yesterday, teachers will discover what is needed to improve literacy for tomorrow's children. Using this study as anecdotal evidence, teachers can reaffirm the power of reading in their own classrooms.

Ms. Helen Lounsbury is a classroom teacher in the Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District where she continues to share her love of books with her students.

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Storytelling: A Journey Into the Woods

— *Marni Schwartz*

As a child I repeatedly asked for a story about a little girl who went at night into the woods to get her mother a cool dipper of water. The well had gone dry from weeks of hot weather. The girl had to wander in the dark, feeling her way along the path, but she headed toward a spring which she knew was there. After reaching the spring and filling the dipper, she started back. On the return trip she generously shared her water first with a panting dog and later with a tired and thirsty old man. Finally she reached home and gave the remaining water to her mother. Each time she shared the water, the dipper was transformed: in the woods it changed first to silver, then to gold, lighting the pathway brighter each time. Finally, after the girl offered it to her mother, the dipper changed to diamonds suspended in the air. The mother, shocked by the only transformation she had seen, let go of the dipper. It sailed out the open window, lifted into the sky, and became the dipper of stars (Piper, 1932).

That folktale, one I return to often as a storyteller, has become for me a metaphor for why I tell stories and encourage children and teachers to step into storytelling. Certainly I still love to read aloud to children, but telling a story takes me and them into the dark woods of it. Walking through a story, we find magic. We may not understand the magic; the journey might be a little scary. Nevertheless, the story lights the way. Telling it, we find new understanding of the tale and of ourselves. At journey's end, we are transformed.

Children as Storytellers

For nearly ten years I have been working with children as storytellers. Sometimes we tell spontaneous personal stories, bits of memory that for some reason rise to the surface. Often in the telling we discover the significance of those bits of our history, much as writers uncover meaning as they draft (Murray, 1985). Children also retell for me, without rehearsal, the stories their teachers or others have told or read repeatedly to them. Sometimes teachers are quite surprised that a child or a group of children can retell vividly a story they may have heard only once. The retellers always create interesting variants depending on what they individually heard in the story, but it is clear that in the retelling they are "inside" the story and making sense of it. It has transformed them, and I believe, it will continue to as they return to it.

Just recently, telling stories with inmates in a correctional facility who were working toward high school equivalency degrees, I heard a man tell "The Billy Goat Gruff" the way he remembered it from childhood. His version contained just one goat trying in vain to get across the troll's bridge without paying a toll. The goat tried to sneak across at night, overpower the troll by barging past him, and in every other way he could devise, cross the bridge without paying. The troll caught the billygoat each time and sent him back. Finally, the troll gobbled him up.

An immigrant from the Virgin Islands, the man told us the story in a rhythmic and humorous way. Then he became serious. It had stuck with him all his life, he said, but recently he had come to see new meaning in it. "One must pay the toll. There is no escaping it." Some other listeners nodded and voiced a choral "Ah" in affirmation. Taken aback by the underlying meaning of his words, I just nodded and added my "Ah," honoring the power of the spoken story.

When I work with tellers during a residency, I coach them over a period of days through the process of rehearsal, drafting and revising orally both their personal stories and other literature-based pieces with the goal of performing them. Such pieces might include folk or fairy tales, novel excerpts, poems, essays, historical monologues, even retellings of movies they've seen or radio dramas they've heard. When they rehearse a story, they go even deeper into the woods of it. They explore the paths of it, looking at character language, description, action. They walk the structure of the story and discover for themselves that a story has bones, or key plot elements, holding it together. Then they get to choose how to fatten or dress the skeleton.

The thing that has struck me most as I've watched children step inside their story choices is how the telling of a story invites them into literacy. They are drawn by the magic of walking into and through a tale, recomposing it as they go. They feel a power in the ability to visualize scenes and characters and in the opportunity to pause and view them for as long as they want. A teller takes control of a story or at least begins to see that the retelling of a story is a matter of making choices about lingering over certain bones and not others. A story takes the pace the teller gives it. The same story retold by two different children is presented quite differently. Even one teller offering the same story twice will find it shifts in big and little ways. The tellers and the listeners, who in certain ways become part of the making of the story as well, learn that a storyteller puts meaning into a story by making those decisions about pace, tone of voice, dramatic movement, or audience participation. I have also seen both groups delight in discovering the existence of the narrator voice in a story. They start to see the narrator as a kind of guide on the journey, one who can be moralistic, ironic, suspenseful, even detached as the story unfolds.

Tanya told the story of Mr. Fox, a suspenseful and rather gruesome Bluebeard variant (Yolen, 1986, pp. 87-90). One day on a visit to a nearby school, she had the chance to tell her story over and over to different library classes. In each telling she was more in control; it was clear she was having fun playing with the audience's reac-

tions. She leaned toward them and watched them pull back. She grinned wickedly as she described the more gruesome details and watched her audience squirm. She experimented with the narrator's tone, sometimes quietly beckoning to the audience just as Mr. Fox beckoned to the naïve Mary. At another time she remained more detached as if proud that the dark tale no longer scared her. Yet, later in that same telling, she let down her narrator's reserve and seemed to delight in the chilling details of the story's climax. She could afford to relive Mary's confusion and horror momentarily. After all, as teller, she knew the story's satisfactory conclusion.

Misconceptions About Storytelling

So why isn't oral storytelling a more integral part of our reading-writing curriculum or our work in every subject area? Two key reasons occur to me. One is similar to what kept us so long - or still keeps us - from teaching writing authentically.

For years most of us taught writing mostly by assigning and correcting it. Oh, maybe we gave tips such as "limit your topic" or we drew diagrams of story structure to show how most stories contain rising action, climax and denouement. However, most of us didn't write anything we really cared about so we weren't demonstrating the struggle of topic focus and structural choice. We didn't write because we had learned to dislike writing in school, receiving such comments as "awk," "purple prose," and "rewrite" with little advice about how to make a passage less awkward or ornate. Most of our teachers didn't write either. They convinced us, indirectly perhaps, that "real" writing comes from talent, a gift few possess. Once, when some of my colleagues and I considered establishing a writing support group for teachers, one person said, "Count me out. I did my writing in college, thank you. I don't have to write to teach writing." At the time, I was shocked to hear what sounded like a mixture of fear and anger in the voice of this ordinarily gentle and innovative teacher. Today, after hearing the stories of the school experiences of many pre-service and in-service teachers, I would not be surprised at such a remark.

Criticism, and the resulting embarrassment and shame, taught so many of us to fear failing at writing.

Criticism, and the resulting embarrassment and shame, taught so many of us to fear failing at writing. Murray, among others, has helped us see that "All writing is experimental in the beginning. It is an attempt to solve a problem, to find meaning, to discover its own way towards understanding." There is "the necessity of failure and the advantage of failure" because through it we learn (1985, p.86).

Storytelling, being both a composing and performing art, elicits the same kind of fear, not so often in children as in adults. When I suggest it to teachers, many say instantly, "Oh, I couldn't do that." Others assume it means memorization - too much work. It is true that some people are natural "hams" and that there is effort in learning to be a skillful performance artist. However, in our classrooms we can invite children into the process of telling stories. We can encourage a range of oral stories, from spontaneous one-minute memories to researched and rehearsed oral histories. We might use storytelling as a way to bring scientific discoveries and geographic locations to life. Anything described through narrative sticks with the learner more. We can demonstrate, thereby encouraging, the stories of process - the "how I figured out this math (or life) problem" stories. We will foster deeper understanding of literature by helping children, individually or chorally, into rehearsed retellings. We don't have to stand the product of one teller against another's. We can honor our "failures" by telling stories of them. I have seen children delight in sharing the stories of their tellings before audiences. "Wow, I was really in the story!" or "I got lost for a minute, but I took a breath and went back inside the story. I had to look away from the class." Different experiences of telling will offer children different rewards.

I see storytelling on a continuum. At one end is the casual conversational tale that begs to be told (and which an agreed upon time limit helps children end). Next is the natural retelling of that tale, often with embellishment. "Oh, tell the story about..." Fish stories and other feats of brilliance come into this category as does the time the teacher messed up as a kid. Gossip shows up along the continuum as well as the joke and the family tale we've heard year after year. Somewhere the story that is more myth than reality, and which becomes more myth-like in the retelling, appears. The leap from personal tale to fiction is sometimes just a small step.

The conscious rehearsal and polishing of a tale enters the continuum eventually. This kind of oral revision will come as children use felt boards for natural retelling, tape record their stories to hear them back again often in the presence of listeners, or travel to other classrooms or settings to "practice" a tale. I hesitate to use "practice" as if there were a difference between the draft of a telling and the final product - because oral stories evolve in nearly every telling. I knew a first grade teacher who held Readers Theater most Friday afternoons. During the week individuals, pairs and small groups signed up for a slot and worked on their productions during activity time, lunch, even at recess on the playground. Some children simply wanted to read aloud publicly, but as the year progressed, the class gradually moved to a combination of storytelling and skits, often repeating stories they'd told or seen earlier in the year. "I can tell this story right out my mouth," a child boasted. Each new audience and each retelling helps learners figure out more about how stories (and audiences) work. What they discover will support them as they read and write and make presentations at every level of schooling.

We need to remember that storytelling is natural. Young and old we tell each other about our lives in line at the bank and at the grocery store, at show-and-tell time and just about any time we find a willing listener. People

often share deeply personal stories with total strangers on buses and planes because telling stories helps us make sense of our lives. Paley (1990) has written extensively about how, through a combination of written dictation and dramatic reenactment, she shows children their fantasy play is storytelling and returning to their stories is important work. We don't have to see storytelling as hard to do. Any preschool or kindergarten teacher will attest to the fact that if one child tells about getting his finger pinched in the door, every other child will have a similar tale to tell. Stories evoke stories. Another's story of embarrassment or tragedy brings out our own tale of woe because we feel a human connection. We also secretly hope that by naming the danger or foolishness we can recognize it in the future and avoid it. Unless, subtly or overtly, we've been taught to be silent, to keep our stories hidden for fear of criticism, we will tell the moments of our lives to each other because we have to – it is in our nature to do so.

...storytelling is even more helpful to the development of language skill because children are creating – actually composing – as they tell.

Therein lies the second problem with making use of storytelling in school. Harold Rosen (1992) says, "Stories are as common as dirt and therefore dismissed or not taken very seriously" (p.79). Not so long ago some of us similarly dismissed reading aloud, believing (or bowing to administrators who believed) it wasn't really teaching. We haven't explored this natural aptitude for telling stories in our classrooms as much as we might because we don't recognize its power as a way to learn about how to use language. When those pinched finger tales start coming we say, "Enough stories, children, we have to get back to work." We've been led to believe that it is reading and writing exclusively that our children must practice. After all, their competency will be tested and our accountablility will be measured based on their literacy.

In recent years we have rediscovered that reading aloud to children helps them internalize structure. It offers them new vocabulary in meaningful contexts so they can hear how unfamiliar words sound, perhaps try them out themselves, and recognize them in similar contexts in the future. Researchers such as Gordon Wells, Don Holdaway, Brian Cambourne and others have shown that reading to children teaches them the rhythms and patterns of language that will aid them as they begin to decode the language of books and encode their ideas in writing. Knowing that, we click our tongues confidently if any unknowing principal still implies that reading aloud is not good use of our time.

I would argue that storytelling is even more helpful to the development of language skill because children are creating - actually composing - as they tell. In any telling from literature, they try new vocabulary "right out their mouths". I talked with a parent once after working with her son's class on a choral telling of "The House That Jack Built". She laughed, "Oh I wondered where he picked up 'forlorn'." In my own classroom, as the year progressed, I saw countless instances of children learning how to "story" from the tales they told, sometimes as they told. Jeff, a student pulled out for remediation much of the time, had practiced with me a rather bland version of the "The Three Billy Goats Gruff". He knew the tale, but he wasn't enjoying telling it to me. The next day the audience's presence helped Jeff literally put 'meat on the bones". The littlest billy goat referred to himself as "chopped beef" recommending his older brother as "tasty like sirloin steak". The second in turn suggested the biggest billy goat who would be "de-licious, like filet mignon". The class roared (and started marketing Jeff's tale to other classes). The act of telling ignited Jeff's creative flame.

John similarly found structure by stepping into the oral mode. He planned to tell about getting in trouble during his elementary years. He had many such stories. John picked one particular incident because it involved the principal. He clearly enjoyed mimicking the large man in gesture and tone. "John, I might have known it was you" brought a burst of laughter and applause from a student audience who clearly knew both characters well. John picked up the cue and instantly restructured the tale to contain three incidents of trouble and three adults repeating, "John, I might have known...". Having observed some participatory tellings, he realized all he needed to do was pause at the right moment and the class would join him in whining the teacher line, "Jo-hn...". This one moment of both academic success and popular appeal affected the way John worked in English class the rest of the year.

When young learners retell a tale they "take a path somewhere between being faithful to it and adapting it to their own sense of the story's meaning" (Rosen, 1992, p.82). Betty Rosen, a high school teacher in an inner-city all male school in London, writes about using storytelling as the foundation of her English curriculum, daring to call her book And None of it Was Nonsense (Rosen, 1988). She believes her multi-ethnic adolescent charges alter their retellings of Greek myths in ways significant to their lives in rough neighborhoods. They find their own sustaining private meanings in the tales their teacher tells and requires them to retell. Lucy Calkins, in Living Between the Lines, describes a New York City classroom where community building and the act of composing begin with the telling of stories. The trust established by the telling and attentive listening nurtures the literacy work ahead (1991, pp. 27-31).

Yes, storytelling is beginning to take a place in the learning activity of schools. Reading theorists encourage the telling of experience stories as a way to activate schema before reading a book. Also we teach young readers to retell and map the stories they have been read in order to show them that stories have similar structures. Many teachers use simple retellings as a way to test comprehension. However, in most of these instances children don't have much time or chance to own the story, to step

inside the woods of it and be applauded for bringing it to life in unique ways or to speak about what that process has revealed to them. The difference between retelling for comprehension assessment and storytelling is the difference between a "This book was about..." book report and a lively, attention-grabbing book talk that allows both the presenter and the listeners to look inside the conflict, mystery, humor or tragedy of a book. Certainly, at times we must use the simple tools of assessment, but at other times we can allow ourselves and our students the thrill of stepping into the woods.

Getting Started

There's no right way to begin. The first time I told a story I half recited - half storytold a narrative poem. At a local library's story circle I was encouraged to pick something I enjoyed reading to my class each year. The first thing that came to mind was "The Mountain Whippoorwill" by Stephen Vincent Benét, a three page poem about a young fiddler who competes at a county fair (Benét, 1942). When I laughed at the thought of reciting the entire piece, the group suggested I simply "Tell the story." I knew the exact words of the first few stanzas so I began as I always had. When I got stuck, they patiently waited while I visualized the tale in my mind's eye and slowly walked my way into a prose version. For certain stanzas I could return to Benét's words because I knew them well. Finally, I got to the end, exhausted but exhilarated. Leaving the world of the mountains, I reentered the library. I had never experienced the story so deeply, had never seen its characters so clearly, despite years of reading it aloud to and reading it chorally with students. Today, after hundreds of retellings, I know the words but still tell the story by seeing the images (Schwartz, 1990).

I occasionally work with teachers who use storytelling but never actually tell a story themselves. I think they fear exposing themselves. There certainly is some risk in those dark woods. However, students love their teachers' stories. They learn so much from a teacher's modeling and are energized to try what we try. It's exciting for them to explore something new alongside an adult who is also exploring. Many teachers begin with a personal tale. "The first time I..." is an easy exercise with which students at every age can find success. I've heard firsts from shoe-tying to funeral-attending, from swimming the deep end to surviving a first epileptic seizure. It is natural to get some accident or trauma stories (one leads to many more) because those are memorable firsts and, in essence, are archetypal stories of survival. I've learned to steer students away from broken bones and stitches by exploring with them the many small triumphs everyone experiences: a first night away from home, a first "grown-up" responsibility, a first success in sports or in a performance (a talent show at camp), the creation of a work of art (from a poem to a treehouse). Everyone has such moments, and they make good stories, each having its own strong beginning and clear end.

Some teachers prefer to stick with book tales. The structure of a printed story is already set. Having students brainstorm titles of tales they heard throughout childhood helps them realize how many stories they already "know". My middle schoolers, wanting to forget they were children, at first assured me no one ever read or told them a story, but slowly, grinning, they began to recall characters from the troll to the tortoise and the hare. Remembered stories become easy tellings because the children already know the "heart" of the story. I ask teachers to search their memories as well or ask them, as the library tellers did of me, "What's a story you often read aloud?" Then tellers young and old are encouraged to let go of the printed words and step inside the images, sounds, smells and textures of the tale. Tellers often struggle before finally relinquishing the beautiful passages of description. The reader of a tale savors elaborate images, but a storyteller's audience needs only a bit of vivid detail and mostly hungers for action.

The secret to success? Enjoy the story. Giggle over "the jitters". Share the moments you love most in each story. Play at bringing small bits of each tale to life. Laugh. Breathe. Close your eyes and envision the tales as if they were movies. Walk silently, sometimes vocally, into the woods. Experience the magic. It's there.

Weaving Storytelling In

Finding places in the curriculum where storytelling fits naturally is the way to make time for it. The places depend on the teacher's view of content. A group of children told me their physical education teacher tells the fable "The Oak and the Willow" at least once a year. In the story the oak's trunk and branches are mighty and strong, but its inability to bend, to be flexible when winds assail, assures the oak's destruction. The children took turns retelling bits of the tale in their own ways. It was clear to me they would retain their unique translations in years to come. A science teacher's students greeted me with stories of Charles Steinmetz, the electrical engineer who was said to have tamed lightning. They told with admiration the tale of his penniless journey to America, his struggle to find work, his creation of an eccentric menagerie of untouchable animals because his hunchbacked, dwarf-like stature made him feel untouchable. They knew of his friendship with Thomas Edison and his pioneering work at the budding Schenectady, New York firm called General Electric. The teacher told me he had read them a Steinmetz biography but was amazed to see how they'd taken up the tales as reference points and kept them alive through retelling as the year progressed.

I've seen teachers incorporate storytelling into units on fairytale variants, the Greeks or other ancient civilizations, art units on the Middle Ages, and historical fiction. The study of Native American groups and other cultures or the Erie Canal era and other significant periods in history becomes more memorable through a storytelling approach. If students learn to step away from the printed text and walk from scene to scene, they can "tell" a 200 page book in a reasonable amount of time. Just about any work can become "story" in the hands of the right teller. On the other hand, if young tellers don't have a model of how to move from the text or if they aren't given the time to look at the bones of the story, they can get lost in the

dense woods of a too-detailed telling. Every year as a middle school language arts teacher, I saw students tell two-hour movies and long books such as Tom Sawyer quite successfully. Others, who had somehow slipped through the cracks, ended up telling lengthy versions of simple fairytales. This was always a case of too little oral rehearsal. I sometimes allow students to rehearse privately, if they so choose, rather than with a partner or group. The solitude helps many make good choices about images to include, but others draft too much detail and dialogue into their tellings and need an honest listener to say, "Speed it up." Strongly suggesting students time their stories and stick to a two-eight minute range helps.

Over the years my students and I have created a list of what Doug Lipman calls "appreciations" (1992). These are qualities we applaud in each other's tellings. I do NOT teach them directly nor critically note their absence. By offering verbal or written positive comments to each other after individual tellings, the children emulate these characteristics, and as a group we devise a list of what works, what makes a story compelling:

- a clear image
- a well-chosen word
- variety in pace
- variety in volume
- direct eye contact
- facial expression
- placing characters in a scene
- an ending which reflects the story's beginning
- repetition of a word or phrase
- "good" pauses
- well-chosen gestures
- natural gestures
- a conveyed love of the story
- character voices which enhance the telling
- placing objects or structures in a scene
- a clear ending, accompanied by a pause so the audience can feel closure

There are countless possible appreciations. Some will contradict others. One teller will use character voices flamboyantly and make it work. Another won't pull it off. I talk about that with students and stress that they find a style and a voice that feels natural. Yet, I encourage experimentation, showing off, if you will. It's all process. We take risks, learn from each other, and marvel at each new discovery. We applaud the awareness that "mistakes" bring. We name all that storytelling has taught us about interpreting and composing in general. We step into the dark woods and find literacy as a result.

Ms. Marni Schwartz, a free lance story teller, is an Adjunct Professor at The Sage Colleges and frequent presenter at state and national conferences. She may be contacted through The Story Studio in Delmar, New York.

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A Proposal for Revising CAR Procedures in New York State

— Richard Allington

Since the advent of the public release of the Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) portrayal in 1985, there have been several shifts in school district responses to low-achieving students that undermine the reliability of the CAR as a portrayal of student achievement trends. More children are being kept out or held out of Kindergarten, more are being retained in the primary grades, and more are being identified as handicapped – especially as language impaired and learning disabled. Some school districts make heavy use of such responses, while others do not. As a result, the CARs often compare apples to oranges.

In some districts it is recommended that certain age-appropriate children not begin Kindergarten when eligible, a sort of preschool retention. The use of both transitional-grade programs (e.g. pre-first grade classes) and early grade retention has increased substantially, especially in schools which had low-achievement profiles on earlier CARs. Many schools now transition or retain 30-50% of their students between grades K-3. This inflates the achievement reported, especially when achievement in high-retention schools is compared to achievement in low-retention schools. Transition and retention would be expensive even if they were effective in increasing student achievement, but they are not.

The proportion of children identified as handicapped has also increased, especially in schools with low-achievement on earlier CARs. There has been a rapid increase in primary grade identification as handicapped, in some schools 15% of the Kindergartners have been identified as handicapped and 30% of the children identified before the grade 3 PEP. There is wide variation in the proportion of children identified as handicapped from district to district and variation in the use of exemptions and PEP test modifications for these children. Children identified as handicapped have been literally vanished from the public accountability reporting system. Even when they take the tests, their scores are not included in the aggregate achievement portrayal on the CAR. Special education is expensive, effective or not, but no evidence of effects on academic achievement is currently collected.

The patterns of use of exclusion, transition or retention, and special education vary, but the current CAR is not sensitive to these variations. School districts can use different 'response patterns' to alter reported PEP achievement and make it appear that progress is being made when the opposite appears more likely. To produce more reliable CAR portrayals two revisions in the current procedures are proposed:

Inclusionary Assessment

All students should participate in the PEP and all students' scores should be included in the aggregate score reported to the public. Test modifications would only be allowed for visually impaired and multiply handicapped students. Exemptions for handicapped would still be allowed, but an achievement score of zero would then be entered for all exempted students. Achievement of all handicapped students who reside in the district would be reported, including students enrolled in out-of-district programs. This revision would provide more reliable information on district performance in educating all students and reduce the current incentive to classify children in order to remove them from the public accountability reports.

Replacing the current practice of assessing grade-level groups with age-level group assessments would provide a more reliable indication of achievement patterns.

Age-level Assessment

Children should be tested in age-level groups. Replacing the current practice of assessing grade-level groups with age-level group assessments would provide a more reliable indication of achievement patterns. We would test by birth year; all students born in 1984 would participate in the Fall 1992 PEP rather than all third grade students. Schools that persisted in excluding or retaining large numbers of students would no longer be rewarded for engaging in bad practice. We would simplify this process by admitting children to school based on their birth year; revising the current birth year and month standard for Kindergarten entry.

Dr. Richard Allington, Professor in the Department of Reading at The University at Albany, is a national expert in the field of reading and remediation.

Examining the Value of Using Alternative Writing Approaches to Enhance Literacy Development

— *Richard Sinatra and Jeffrey Beaudry*

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the efficacy of using two alternative approaches to composition writing when compared to the standard New York State procedure for report writing for 327 elementary school students at grades 3-6. The underlying study question was whether the availability of reading information as in the state procedure acted as a benefit or detriment to the writing proficiency of students. Three independent raters scored six sets of compositions written by the students during three modes of writing. Results showed that the Report Writing mode in which printed information was available did not improve between pre- and post-writing trials and at the fifth grade level, results from the second report showed a significant decrease. In four of eight pre- and post-writing comparisons for Visual Writing and Imagery Writing significance was found for third, fourth, and sixth grade students. Between trials at third and fourth grade levels, a dramatic reduction occurred in the number of students performing below minimum competency in writing. A major implication of the study appears to be that presentation of scripts of information does not improve the writing of reports.

How do you help your students write more effectively? Do you provide a variety of classroom and experiential situations whereby they use many writing forms/genres to express meaning and to communicate? Do you also provide situations whereby students can look into their imaginations and be stimulated by nonverbal impressions and creativity? Or do you provide just enough writing simulations to help students master one type of writing style, such as a business letter or a report with an introduction, body, and a conclusion? This paper will suggest that practice and immersion in many writing styles may help reinforce the uniqueness inherent in any one style.

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One of the three writing styles required in the New York State Regents Competency Testing Program is the writing of a report (University of The State of New York, 1980). The report writing task attempts to simulate what may occur for course related assignments in English, social studies or science. However, rather than ask students to generate a report in which they have to select a topic, research the requisite information, and think through the organization and content of the written work, the State provides the bulk of the content on a written page for students to read and rearrange.

The report writing task requires that a student read a list of information pertaining to a situational theme. The list of information, likened to a set of notes about the theme, is arranged on the page in mixed up order. The student is asked to organize the notes into a written report and is urged to imagine he/she is writing the report for the English class, to rearrange the notes before starting the first draft, and to include all the listed information.

The task may require more reading analysis to "see" how the provided content fits together rather than requiring the thinking of synthesis, the connecting of ideas generated by the writer to fulfill his/her visualized purpose expressed in a central thesis. In short, the task required by the state doesn't ask writers to construct meaning but rather to fit bits of information together. An underlying question for educators is whether the availability of presented information as in the report writing task acts to curtail the elaborative and creative nature of the writing process.

Literacy Relationships

The relationships of reading to writing and writing to reading have been well documented. Squire (1983) emphasized that remedial, developmental and above-average students need instructional experience in both narrative and expository discourse modes if they are to be expected to comprehend and compose using these major writing styles. Teaching students to attend to the organizational components of a well-formed story - the narrative structure - will not only improve comprehension (Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1983) but will also improve the quality and creativity of stories that students compose (Fitzgerald & Teasley, 1985). Furthermore, children's comprehension is not only strengthened when stories are stored as idealized mental representations (Fitzgerald, 1989), but learning to search out the organizational structure of expository discourse lays a solid foundation for the development of the competent writer (Calfee & Curley, 1984).

A Study Need

The researchers were professors in the School of Education and Human Services at a private university located in the borough of Queens, New York City. They listened to the comments of teachers regarding the state's programs in assessing the writing competency of its students through the grades. Often criticized was the report writing task. Teachers complained that even though their students performed well on other writing tasks, the report writing task limited and constricted the writing competency of their students. Students felt restricted to include just the bits of information provided. Also, students would connect ideas poorly and often in an irrelevant way. Because they weren't constructing the ideas they would include in a self-generated report, they joined ideas that they read in lists in the best possible way. Teachers felt that the reading/writing connection wasn't acting in a constructive manner in the way this writing task was arranged.

The researchers sought to investigate alternative means of presenting information for writing. In fact, they wished to determine what would occur if print information was not provided for students. They set up a study design in which two alternative writing procedures were compared to the report writing mode of the New York State procedure. The two alternative procedures allowed for an absence of printed language to be read by students before or during writing. These procedures entailed the use of imagery and slides projected for whole class viewing. The study specifically investigated the results of writing achieved for reports and compositions generated through three different presentations for students in grades three through six.

METHOD

Population

A parochial school in nearby Queens, NY volunteered to provide classes of students for the study. A total of 327 third through sixth grade students and 11 teachers from the parochial school participated in the study. There were three classes of students at each grade level except for the fifth grade where there were only two classes. The classes were generally achieving at or above grade level in reading and writing according to the Achievement Test Series for the Comprehensive Assessment Program administered by the diocese. However, some of the 168 males and 159 females were achieving below their expected grade levels as indicated in Table 1. Standardization and norming of the Achievement Series included 157 public school districts and 16 Catholic school systems (Wick, 1983).

Four batteries from the Achievement Series were analyzed for this study. These batteries were: Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary, Language Total, and Grammar. Table 1 shows the standardized test results for the four batteries for each of the four grade levels and also shows the percent of youngsters at each grade level who were performing below the expected level of achievement at the time of autumn test administration.

Table 1 Participants' Background Data: Standarized Test Battery Results and Percent Achieving Below Expected Grade Level

Grade	Reading Comprehension	Reading Vocabulary	Language Total	Grammar
	Mean Grade Level (% Achieving Below Expected Grade Level)			
3	4.11 (28%)	4.07 (26%)	3.88 (20%)	3.71 (62%)
4	5.76 (12%)	5.26 (21%)	5.58 (12%)	5.66 (11%)
5	6.37 (59%)	6.87 (43%)	6.73 (45%)	6.87 (34%)
6	7.45 (43%)	6.90 (48%)	7.31 (37%)	6.97 (41%)

Procedure for Students

Over three-week cycles beginning in early January and ending in mid March, students participated in three approaches to writing, with the Report Writing approach highly related to a reading situation. The three approaches were called "Report Writing", "Visual Writing", and "Imagery Writing". The first sequence of writing according to the three approaches was conducted as a practice run to familiarize students with the directions and procedures for each approach. During the two study cycles - cycle 1 and cycle 2 - students wrote six essays which were evaluated by trained raters. Within each cycle a schedule was established so that alternate approaches were occurring in a mixed order within and across grade levels.

The Report Writing mode was modeled after the procedure used in the writing assessment program of New York State (University of the State of New York, 1980). After students read a short paragraph describing the reason they had assembled notes on a topic, they had to make complete sentences of the notes while including all of them in a unified report. From ten to fifteen pieces of information were listed for each report. For instance, in the report where the student became a reporter for the school newspaper to cover a party given in the school, the student had to use such notes as "balloons on walls and tables", "a range of rock music", and "food of all types".

The Visual Writing mode was prompted by color slides which were projected on a screen or wall for whole class viewing. Each slide story or report consisted of an arranged sequence of from 12 to 15 slides that inferred a unified theme. The slide reports used in the study suggested ways that tires are used in the environment (practice run), the damage caused from a severe winter storm, and the exploits of firefighters in attempting to save a historical building. For instance, the winter storm sequence initially showed the darkened clouds of an approaching severe storm. These initial slides were followed by scenes of fallen trees, damaged cars, and icy streets. One slide even showed two children looking with dismay at tree branches across the swings in a park.

Each slide report was shown to the whole class in two viewings. During the initial presentation, students silently

viewed the slides of that particular set projected at a fairly rapid rate in order to promote their visualization of the whole. Each student was then asked to compose and write a sentence that might express the central theme that each perceived from the slide story.

A second viewing followed at a much slower pace during which students were directed to write a phrase or sentence for each slide. Students were reminded by their teachers that just as each slide contributed to the meaning of the slide story, each of their sentences should relate to the central idea expressed in their theme sentence. By the end of this viewing most students had written at least one page of phrases or sentences on their perspective of the visual story. At this point, they were asked to combine and rearrange their notes and sentences to produce a final "polished" composition. In this mode, the teacher presented no oral and written information on what to write about, other than oral prompts about the process of accomplishing the writing.

The third writing approach was based on the stimulation of imagery. Writing from imagery required that each student visualize a topic named by the teacher. Students had to write about "The Person They Liked or Disliked the Most" (practice), "A Happy Time in Their Lives", and their "Favorite or Least Favorite Place". Students were asked to close their eyes and jot down thoughts in sentence fragments as the teacher posed questions to elicit sensory impressions. They were prompted to look into their imaginations, to describe, feel, hear, and sense the images. Aside from writing the title of the imagery theme on the chalkboard, written information about content was not supplied by the teacher.

Many educators have noted that visualization and imagery usage positively influences literacy performance (Levin, 1973; Sadoski, Goetz, & Kangiser, 1988; Smith, 1982). Paivio's belief is that when visual imagery is aroused and associated with verbal information, comprehension, retention, and production of verbal language is strengthened (1979). Because the verbal and imaginative neural systems have rich interconnections, learners can use words to describe pictures, use words to describe their imagery, and use imagery to assist in the choice of words (Bower, 1972).

Procedure for Raters

Three independent raters, all of whom were licensed reading professionals, were used to evaluate each student's written composition. The score assigned to each student's paper was the averaged score for the three raters. The raters had received lengthy training in holistic scoring procedures at the university, had participated as raters in previous writing research, and had achieved high interrater reliability using the Diederich Rating Scale (1974). Their interclass correlations as determined by the Shrout and Fleiss procedure (1979) were found to be .95 for third grade writers, .97 for fourth grade writers, .94 for fifth grade writers, and .97 for sixth grade writers.

The Diederich Scale was used to evaluate the written compositions for two major reasons. First the scale provided a holistic way to obtain measures of a student's "general merit" and mechanics performance of any composition. General merit is made up of weighted components given to ideas, organization, wording and flavor, while mechanics is composed of weighted scores given to usage, punctuation, spelling and handwriting. Secondly, and most important for the alternative modes investigated in this study, the components of ideas and organization were doubly weighted in value. Thus, "ideas" and "organization" were weighted on a scale from 2 to 10 while the other six components were weighted on a scale from 1 to 5. The raw scores of all eight components were added and the total was then multiplied by two to obtain a percentage score in writing competency. In terms of state requirements, New York requires that a graduating student achieve at least a 65% competency level in three writing tasks, report writing being one of them (University of the State of New York, 1980).

RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 present statistical and descriptive analysis of the data. Table 2 reveals the composition means and comparisons for each of the six rated compositions at each of the four grade levels.

Pairwise t-tests were conducted to compare cycle 1 and cycle 2 trials in each writing mode. For Grade 3 students,

Table 2 Statistical Comparisons of Writing Modes by Grade

Grade	Writing Modes (Means)	(sample size)	n	t-value	Prob.
3	Visual 1 (63.9)	v. Visual 2 (71.0)	80	-8.79	.0001 ***
	Imagery 1 (66.7)	v. Imagery 2 (69.3)	81	-4.57	.0001 ***
	Report 1 (68.8)	v. Report 2 (69.8)	83	-1.81	.074
4	Visual 1 (63.3)	v. Visual 2 (67.5)	75	-6.06	.0001 ***
	Imagery 1 (66.1)	v. Imagery 2 (66.8)	71	-1.22	.226
	Report 1 (67.5)	v. Report 2 (68.7)	83	-1.34	.186
5	Visual 1 (71.5)	v. Visual 2 (72.7)	59	-1.63	.109
	Imagery 1 (73.8)	v. Imagery 2 (71.3)	58	3.19	.01 ** (a)
	Report 1 (75.4)	v. Report 2 (69.5)	62	7.41	.0001 ***(a)
6	Visual 1 (73.8)	v. Imagery 2 (75.3)	71	-1.17	.246
	Imagery 1 (72.6)	v. Imagery 2 (74.8)	58	-2.23	.029 *
	Report 1 (75.6)	v. Report 2 (74.3	62	1.20	.236

* = $p < .05$
** = $p < .01$
*** = $p < .001$
(a) Statistically significant in direction opposite of intended results.

Visual and Imagery Writing significantly improved. For Grade 4 student writers, Visual Writing significantly increased while for Grade 6 student writers Imagery Writing improved. Unexpectedly, at the Fifth Grade level, both Imagery Writing and Report Writing showed a significant decrease. At no grade level between pairwise trials of writing approaches, did Report Writing improve significantly after practice and, in two cases at the Fifth and Sixth Grade levels, it decreased between trials. For Grade 5 students, Report Writing revealed a highly significant reduction.

The researchers also sought to determine what percentage of students were writing compositions below acceptable standards for New York State and if these students benefited from the three writing approaches. Table 3 shows the range of composition scores as judged by the average results of the three raters for each grade level and for each of the three approaches within the cycle. The percentage figure for each range of scores indicates the percent of students who were writing at 65% competency and below at each composition task.

The reader will note the dramatic reduction in the number of students performing below minimum competency for writing at the third and fourth grade levels. At the Sixth Grade level, a notable reduction occurred for Imagery Writing, from 8% below competency to 0% below. Only at the Fifth Grade level, as indicated earlier, were below-level students not able to achieve more accomplished essays.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Writing Modes by Grade

	First Cycle of Writing: Range of Scores (Percent Below Composition Score of 65)			Second Cycle of Writing: Range of Scores (Percent Below Composition Score of 65)		
Grade	Visual	Imagery	Report	Visual	Imagery	Report
3	33-80 (48%)	48-85 (38%)	55-80 (27%)	57-85 (16%)	57-84 (19%)	55-80 (15%)
4	50-82 (51%)	50-78 (31%)	57-78 (31%)	58-80 (24%)	57-77 (26%)	55-85 (14%)
5	55-88 (8%)	55-88 (7%)	60-92 (7%)	55-85 (10%)	57-90 (10%)	55-87 (23%)
6	50-90 (6%)	60-90 (8%)	5-95 (0%)	60-90 (5%)	65-90 (0%)	60-90 (1%)

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

It is a generally accepted practice for districts within New York State to administer preliminary competency tests in writing to their junior high and secondary students. In this way, they ascertain which students need special help in achieving competency with the three writing modes tested by the state: the business letter, the report, and the persuasive essay. Students who need help in achieving competency with these three modes prior to graduation from high school are often provided with English classes in which they do practice writing exercises modeled after the required state tasks. This study has suggested that "drill and practice" in one standard state procedure may not be the most advantageous way to increase students' competency with that writing style. As revealed in this study for elementary-grade students, practice with Report Writing did not improve after trials and at the fifth grade level, students decreased in overall writing competency by nearly a full six points on the Diederich Rating Scale (1974).

A second implication derived from this study is that the reading of scripts of information to be embedded in a report does not appear to be an effective way of teaching how to write a report. Using a list of notes which were not self-generated by students is probably more of a limiting thinking task than an expansive one. Students may not be provoked to search for connections between and among ideas, but search for the best ways to merely connect the information provided. When the Report Writing mode is compared to the Visual and Imagery Writing modes in which there was an absence of printed language, the lack of gains in Report Writing scores is an anomaly. In four of eight instances for writers at third through sixth grade levels there were significant improvements between trials when students had to generate their own written language to write a story or report. The visual slide approach presented students with concrete ideas to both stimulate language and to write an original report. The imagery approach provoked students to look into their imaginations to use their best wording to describe the sensory images they were experiencing.

Rather than teach writing through the reading of scripts of information, a more beneficial approach to enhance composing development may be to capitalize on the visualization powers of students. Visualization and imagery production would seem to be key strategies utilized by students before, during, and after reading and writing experiences. This thinking occurs during prediction making, unlocking elements of story structure or grammar, brainstorming, summarizing, writing first drafts, and revisions. Techniques of how to intentionally stimulate imagery to assist in written literacy proficiency can be found in published sources for the reader (Irwin, 1991; McNeil, 1987; Sinatra, 1986; Sinatra & Stahl-Gemake, 1983).

In the whole language and integrated language arts classrooms of today, young children's visualizations are an important ingredient in the whole literacy process. Teachers have emergent readers and writers use the retelling strategy to allow children to create their own picture story books, big books, flip books, accordion books, and pop-up books. In these books children visualize the discourse style of the narrative and create art to represent episodes of time, place, and character interactions. These episodes are linked together as frames of a retold story and propel children to write about the meaning of their own visualized stories as well as to read the stories produced by their peers.

Using graphic organizers and semantic maps as visual organizing frameworks are other ways to help students use printed ideas from textual readings in an overall holistic plan. The advantage of the graphic organizer strategy is that the student is stimulated to provide the textual information to "fill in" the concept figures (boxes, circles, triangles) on the organizer. This strategy has been defined as an interactive one to use "between reader and text by which meaning is found and created" (International Reading Association, 1989). Recently, we described a procedure where-

by picture stories (much like the slide sequences used in this study) were combined with different structural map frameworks to help culturally diverse sixth and seventh grade students improve in their literacy development (Sinatra, Beaudry, Stahl-Gemake & Guastello, 1990).

Finally, as demonstrated by those in the early stages of written literacy development, particularly those who were weak in writing at the third and fourth grade levels, involvement with various modes of writing improves written competency. A suggestion noted in the national Writing Report Card (Applebee, Langer & Mullis, 1986) was that writing process instruction needs to focus on teaching students how to think more effectively as they're involved in the writing process. This study has shown that the Visual Story and Imagery Writing approaches did improve the thinking processes involved during writing as measured by the criteria of the Diederich Rating Scale.

Rather than examine the relationship among writing modes as was done in this study, researchers and teachers could extend this study to examine relationships between various writing modes and reading comprehension. While we noted earlier in this paper the strong relationships that appear to exist between reading and writing, the interaction of one upon the other still warrants further examination. For instance, Levin (1973) and Yarmey and Bowen (1972) have reported the effects of visual imagery on reading comprehension in their landmark studies. In the Levin study, one group of disabled readers having sufficient decoding skills but lacking organizational strategies was asked to imagine a picture for each sentence used in a story. This group scored 40 percent higher in comprehension than a matched group of disabled readers who were asked to read the story alone. Levin felt that the visual imagining aided the poor readers' organizational strategies unconsciously allowing them to integrate verbal and visual input. Yarmey and Bowen found that both educable retarded and normal children performed better in comprehension when they were asked to generate a visual image corresponding to each sentence of a story.

The major implication to be drawn from this study is that to improve students' overall writing development, they need to be provided with tasks that require the use of many writing styles. They need to write not only in writing class or during a writing "period" but also in the various school disciplines using diverse writing forms/genres. Writing needs to occur in every course of the curriculum (Lloyd-Jones, 1991), and it needs to be the centerpiece of language development because it is through clear writing that clear thinking emerges (Boyer, 1991). It is the engagement and interaction of writing accompanied by appropriate feedback that is important for good writing development. Furthermore, by presenting students with varying writing approaches, it may be that their reading comprehension improves as well because they have learned to unlock the structures of text organization.

Dr. Sinatra is Professor of Reading and Director of the Reading Clinic at St. John's University. Dr. Beaudry is Senior Associate and Program Evaluator at Northwestern Regional Educational Laboratories.

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Profiling Students' Narrative-Writing Proficiencies

— Peter Mosenthal

ABSTRACT

Patterns of second, fourth and sixth grades students' narrative writing are presented. Building on the premise that measurement must inform practice, it is argued that the present rank order system of evaluation has little impact on teaching. Using the analogy of clothes manufacturing, tailoring instruction to students' profiles is strongly suggested.

Anthropometry as Assessment

As Boorstin (1973) has argued, our ability to produce effective goods and services has always been closely tied to our ability to establish common measures, and then, using these measures, identify generalizable patterns among individuals and groups. Based on these patterns, goods and services can then be tailored to different individuals or groups with shared characteristics in a cost-effective manner.

Among the many examples Boorstin uses to support this point is the rise of the ready-made-clothing industry. Before 1860, the assumption was that each person's body was unique. Given this assumption, there was no reason to manufacture large quantities of clothing that would fit different wearers. If a person wanted a proper fit, they made their own clothes or employed a personal tailor. However, with the outbreak of the Civil War, this produced a sudden demand for uniforms in great quantities. Using inches as a standard metric, the army discovered that certain body measurements tended to recur in combination with predictable regularity. For instance, if a man's waist measured 38 inches and his sleeve-length was 34 inches, then 80 to 90 percent of the time the man's shoulders would have a certain breadth. This simple discovery made it possible to manufacture well-fitting clothes for a large population. Simple though it was, this discovery was essential to the ready-made-clothing industry, for, without it, no store could be provided with a disposable stock which could readily and inexpensively fit customers representing a variety of body shapes and sizes.

Over time, patterns of variables further emerged which enabled clothes manufacturers to aggregate variables (e.g., neck size and sleeve length). Thus, instead of producing different shirts representing multiple combinations of neck and sleeve length (e.g., one set of shirts with a neck size of 15.5 and a sleeve length of 32, and another set of shirts with a neck size of 15 and sleeve length of 30), manufacturers began to produce clothes including sizes "small," "medium," "large," "extra-large," and "extra-extra large." In accomplishing this, they added greater tolerance to the neck size and used the average sleeve length based on mean arm length. While this reduced the overall fit between shirts manufactured and their wearers, this also greatly reduced production problems and costs.

Such discoveries and practices gave rise to "anthropometry," the measurement of individuals with a "view to discovering those patterns of physical and mental characteristics which recur among people differing in such dimensions as age, gender, and years of schooling." The importance of anthropometry was that it spurred the increase and diffusion of information about standards of measurement in numerous fields. For instance, based on this science, Daniel Ryan, in 1880, published *Human Proportions in Growth: Being the Complete Measurements of the Human Body for Every Age and Size during the Years of Juvenile Growth.* In short, this book served as an invaluable scientific guide for standardizing measurements in juveniles', boys', and men's ready-made clothing. Besides being useful for the design of clothes, manufacturers found Ryan's information helpful in countless other ways, such as in improving the design for school furniture and setting standard room and door dimensions in schools.

As anthropometry matured, this significantly enhanced America's standard of living. Notes Boorstin (1973, p. 189), "By the early twentieth century...for the first time in history, it was possible for a man to walk into a clothing store, indicate that he was a '42' and put on a jacket that, with little or no alteration, would satisfy a fastidious eye. People thus began to think of themselves as belonging to certain 'sizes'—in shoes, shirts, trousers, and hats..." In short, through the science of anthropometry, individuals who previously never could afford new clothes now could afford them. Anthropometry, based upon its use of standardized measurement, made it possible that the benefit of a few could now be the benefit of many.

From Anthropometry to Modern Educational Measurement

Although the label "anthropometry" is no longer used in education per se, its cousin "educational measurement" remains a widespread concern (Linn, 1989). As Bunderson, Inouye, and Olsen (1989, p. 368) have defined it, this type of measurement ". . .is the process of specifying the position, or positions, for educational purposes, of persons, situations, or events in educationally relevant scales under stipulated conditions." When we analyze this definition, we see that it is not all that different from

the anthropometry of relating patterns of clothes sizes to characteristics of body dimensions. First, both require the development of scales. This involves, in part, the selection of a common unit of measure. In clothes anthropometry, the unit of measure is usually the "inch," which can be used to measure the waist of a pair of pants and the waist of an individual. Similarly, in educational measurement, this unit often is a set of response probabilities (i.e., "percentage-correct values" for each task) which can be used as a measure of task or performance difficulty as well as a measure of reader or writer proficiency.

Second, both the anthropometry of clothes and educational measurement involve the specification of a position, or positions, along the developed scales of measurement. More simply put, this means that, over time, individuals or groups with unknown body part sizes will have to be measured in order to relate them to a scale comprised of, say, different pants sizes or performance criteria. Some of these individuals will have smaller inseam and waist sizes while others will have larger sizes. Other individuals will have lower proficiencies while others will have higher proficiencies. From time to time, these same individuals or groups will need to have their positions recalibrated along these scale dimensions, as people may change in their weight and proficiency.

...the anthropometry of clothes and educational measurement involve the specification of a position, or positions, along the developed scales of measurement.

Finally, clothes anthropometry and educational measurement are similar to the extent that the objects of both are people with different patterns of characteristics. Both anthropometry and educational measurement must make sense of these patterns in effective and efficient ways. In the former, the critical concern is with the size and shape of people. In attempting to relate the size and shape of clothes to the size and shape of people, numerous measures have to be taken before a good fit between the two can be accomplished so that individual variations in people sizes are accommodated. In the latter, the critical concern often is with the underlying proficiencies of individuals. In attempting to relate the level of performance criteria to the proficiencies of students, numerous measures have to be administered to different groups. By understanding what constitutes the different levels of performance criteria and which students are likely to perform at each of the levels, we can then design instruction which systematically moves students from one criterion level to the next.

Relating Educational Measurement to Instruction

To date, much discussion has focused on the issue of how to use measurement found in research and testing to improve practice. However, this effort has been rather limited, as most measurement is based on comparing individuals to individuals, individuals to groups, or groups to groups rather than relating individuals and groups to performance criteria requiring successively more complex processing strategies (Baker, O'Neil, & Linn, 1993). As such, measurement often enables us to rank order students in terms of their reading or writing proficiencies but provides little insight into knowing how we might tailor instruction to suit students representing different proficiency levels.

In terms of clothes anthropometry, this would be similar to the situation where we use measurement to rank order people in terms of their relative size but provide no attention to those dimensions (such as neck size, sleeve length, waist size, and shoulder width) which determine how clothes must be systematically altered to fit different groups of wearers.

An example of this approach to measurement can be been found in how research has measured narrative writing proficiency. This research is based on the observation that narratives tend to be organized in terms of episodes such as the following (Graesser, Golding, & Long, 1991):

Setting describes the story's characters as well as the time and place of the story.

Initiating Event describes an action that directly influences a narrative's character(s).

Continuing Event describes an action that follows an initiating event; in some instances, a continuing event may consist of an action which follows from a preceding continuing event. Continuing events are signaled temporally by such words as "and," "then," "next," "after," and "before."

Causative describes an action or condition which produces a change in state such that an identifiable effect (or outcome) is produced. Such an episode is always signaled by a causative term such as "because," "so," and "consequently."

Resolution describes an opinion or observation stated with regard to a given outcome or effect (e.g., "And they lived happily ever after").

Goal describes a desired outcome of a character expressed by such terms as "want," "intend," and "desire."

Attempt is an action (or a series of actions) carried out by a character to achieve an identified goal.

Block is a force internal or external to a character that prevents this character from realizing his or her goal.

In traditional experiments, students tend to be divided into two groups reflecting two different "treatments" (e.g., one group has more "metacognitive narrative knowledge" than the second). Students in the two groups are then asked to write a story (either by recalling it or by extemporaneously creating it). Analysis of the two groups' narratives then reveals that one group tends to have more "critical episodic elements" than the second group. This thus confirms that the first group has more of the "treatment substance" (e.g., more metacognitive narrative knowledge) than the second group (Mosenthal, 1984).

While such approaches to measurement are useful for building theory, they are not particularly useful for teach-

ers. For one, such an approach produces an extremely limited scale: a scale which consists of a "low proficiency condition" (i.e., the condition reflective of the low metacognitive narrative knowledge group) and a "high proficiency condition" (i.e., the condition reflective of the high metacognitive narrative knowledge group). Second, while such an approach accounts for proficiency differences between groups, it does not account for differences within groups. In short, this approach, while maximizing between-group differences also minimizes within-group differences. While such differences may not be statistically warranted, they may be instructionally necessary.

The result of such thinking is that, in translating such findings into practice, we are led to believe that "two sizes fit all"; we have performance criteria for high proficiency students and we have performance criteria for low proficiency students. However, we are not sure whether our two identified performance level criteria represent two extremes (e.g., sizes "small" and "extra-extra-large") or two successive levels (e.g., "small" and "medium"). What we need to do is to "fine tune" our scale to ensure that the fit between our students' proficiencies and our performance criteria closely match (Mosenthal & Kirsch, 1992). By accomplishing this, we are better equipped to scaffold our instruction in a way that most precisely moves students from one performance criterion level to the next.

How this can be accomplished in terms of profiling students' narrative writing ability is illustrated in the next section.

Scaling Written Narrative Proficiency

To develop an anthropometry of students' narrative proficiencies, the first thing we need to do is to develop a performance-criterion scale (Mosenthal & Kirsch, 1993a, b). In attempting to accomplish this, we began by instructing second-, fourth-, and sixth-grade students in a large school district in upstate New York to "Please write a story about your favorite animal." One-hundred-and-three second graders, 125 fourth graders, and 132 sixth graders participated.

Second, six raters then analyzed the 360 narrative compositions in terms of their episodic elements (as presented above). Inter-rater reliability was determined by having two raters each rate 120 compositions. Reliability was defined in terms of the number of similar episodes identified between the two raters. On average, reliability ranged from 69 to 81 percent.

Third, a hierarchy of performance criteria was identified. This hierarchy consisted of six levels which included different episode combinations. Compositions reflecting the simplest level include primarily **Setting Information** which describes the time and place of the story and provides details about the character. An example of such a composition is as follows:

> *There wons was a rabit namd Petr. Petr livd in a hol in a tree. He had a mom. 2 sitrs*

Compositions reflecting the second level of composition complexity include **Setting + Initiating Event information.** Such compositions describe the time and place of the story, provide details about the character and describe an action related to a character in the narrative. A composition illustrating this level of performance complexity includes the following:

> *There was a rabit and it had big ears and it had a flufy tail and it was mine. I took my rabit to bed.*

Compositions reflecting the fourth level of composition complexity include **Setting + Initiating Event + Continuing Event + Cause/Outcome (+ Resolution).** Such compositions describe the time and place of the story, provide details about the character, describe an action related to a character in the narrative , and include a cause (signaled by a causative term, such as "so") followed by an identifiable outcome. In such cases, the resolution may or may not be present. A composition illustrating this level of performance complexity includes the following:

> *Rabbits are my favorite animal. One day my grandmother gave me a rabit to keep. This rabit hoped everywere. And it hoped into the road. It got hit by a car. And so the rabit isn't my favorite animal (any) more. Yesterday grandmother gave me a cat.*

Compositions reflecting the fifth level of composition complexity includes **Setting + Initiating Event + Goal + Attempt + Outcome (+ Resolution).** Such compositions describe the time and place of the story, provide details about the character, describe an action related to a character in the narrative, identify a goal to be accomplished, an attempt on the part of the character to achieve his, her, or its goal, and include an outcome which results from the attempt. A composition illustrating this level of performance complexity is the following:

> *I have a rabbit. It is white. Once I pretended the rabbit was real. He and I went for a walk in the woods. The rabbit said he lived in a hole. I wanted to see his home. The hole was near a tree. The rabbit said I had to follow him. We crawld inside and found the rabbits home. He had a colored TV and everything. We watched a show about rabbits. We played video games. It was a fun day.*

Compositions reflecting the sixth and highest level of composition complexity includes **Setting + Initiating Event + Goal + Attempt + Block + Outcome (+ Resolution).** Such compositions describe the time and place of the story, provide details about the character, describe an action related to a character in the narrative, identify a goal to be accomplished, an attempt on the part of the character to achieve his, her, or its goal, a block which prevents achieving the goal, followed by an outcome which circumvents or removes the block. A composition illustrating this level of performance complexity is the following:

> *My dad likes rabbit stew. He liked rabbit stew so much he decided he wanted to raise rabbits. We raised a rabbit which we called Stew. I fed Stew every day. My dad cleaned his cage. When easter*

came, my dad went to get Stew for the Stew. But my brother and I hid him in the basement. Because dad coulnd't find the rabbit, we had turkey stew instead of Stew stew. My dad liked turkey stew so much that now we always eat turkey stew instead of rabbit stew.

Note that the above performance criterion levels represent what is called an "implication hierarchy." Basically this means that each successively higher performance criterion level includes the same episodic elements as does the lower levels plus one or two additional episodic elements.

The fourth step in developing a narrative scale is to identify the percentage distribution of scores by performance criterion levels. In terms of the compositions written, we did this by dividing the total number of students at a grade level by the number of students whose compositions met the criteria for each performance criterion level. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Percentage of Second-, Fourth-, and Sixth-Graders Performing at each of the Six Performance Criterion Levels in Narrative Writing

Grade Level	Criterion Level 1 Setting	Criterion Level 2 Setting + Initiating Event	Criterion Level 3 Setting + Initiating Event + Continuing Event	Criterion Level 4 Setting + Initiating Event + Continuing Event + Cause/ Outcome	Criterion Level 5 Setting + Initiating Event + Goal + Attempt + Outcome	Criterion Level 6 Setting + Initiating Event + Goal + Attempt + Block + Outcome
2nd Graders (n = 103)	67% (n= 69)	21% (n= 22)	11% (n= 11)	1% (n= 1)	0% (n= 0)	0% (n= 0)
4th Graders (n = 125)	4% (n= 8)	11% (n= 14)	61% (n= 76)	19% (n= 21)	5% (n= 6)	0% (n= 0)
6th Graders (n = 132)	2% (n= 3)	5% (n= 7)	14% (n= 19)	66% (n= 86)	11% (n= 15)	2% (n= 2)

The fifth step is to examine the distribution of percentages to determine students' proficiency levels by grade levels. In applying this to Table 1, we see that 67 percent of the second graders performed at criterion level 1; 21 percent at criterion level 2, 11 percent at criterion level 3, and only one percent at criterion level 4. We also find that 15 percent of fourth graders performed at criterion levels 1 and 2, 61 percent performed at criterion level 3, 19 percent performed at level 4, and five percent performed at level 5. Finally, we see that seven percent of the sixth graders performed at criterion levels 1 and 2, 14 percent performed at criterion level 3, 66 percent performed at criterion level 4, and 13 percent at criterion levels 5 and 6.

Tailoring Instruction to Proficiency Profiles

Once we have completed a profile of students' proficiencies, we are then in a position to tailor our instruction (Mosenthal & Kirsch, 1992). To accomplish this, we must decide how precise we want to be. In short, this is not unlike the problem which clothes manufacturers face in deciding how to design clothes to fit people with known size and shape dimensions. On the one hand, we may opt to make our instruction quite precise. This would be similar to designing a variety of shirt sizes to accommodate a range of size differences (e.g., shirts with a 14 inch neck, shirts with a 14.5 inch neck, and shirts with a 15 inch neck with different sleeve lengths as well). For instance, this would mean that in teaching second graders how to write narratives, we might form three groups. We would teach the students who only included setting information in their compositions how to write narratives which included both setting information as well as an initiating event. For those who wrote compositions with setting information and an initiating event, we would teach these students how to write narratives which included continuing events. Similarly, in teaching fourth graders, we might design five different lessons for the five groups of students at each of the five criterion levels. And in teaching fifth graders, we might design six different lessons for the six groups of students at each of the six different criterion levels.

On the other hand, we may wish to take a more cost-effective approach, grouping students on the basis of criteria shared between criterion levels. This approach would be similar to the one used by clothes manufacturers who design clothes to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, including unisex designs which only distinguish between sizes "small," "medium," and "large". For instance, under this approach, we might design only two tailored instructional approaches at the second-grade level, one for the 69 students who included just setting in their compositions and the second for the 33 who included setting and initiating event information. Moreover, we might have only two tailored instructional approaches for the third-grade level, one for the 98 students who included just setting, initiating event, and continuing

event information and a second for the 27 who included outcome information. And again, we might have only two tailored instructional approaches for the sixth-grade level, one for the 29 students who included no outcome information and a second for the 103 who included outcome information.

Summary and Extension Activities

Whatever of these approaches we might select, the point is that, by having profiled students using our narrative scale, we are in a position to better understand the nature of individual students' proficiencies not only between grade levels but within grade levels as well. As such, we have a much more precise basis for knowing how to design and relate our instruction to accommodate the shape and size of our students' narrative writing proficiencies.

As a teacher, you may wish to try this approach in your class by giving the same assignment as described above (i.e., "Please write a story about your favorite animal"). After your students have written their stories, identify the various episodes in each. Based on what episodes you find, determine which performance criterion level each student's writing represents. Count up the number of students performing at each criterion level and then divide this number by the total number of students in your class. Based on the resulting percentages, you can then table the distribution of your students' narrative writing proficiencies by criterion level (as was done in Table 1 on the previous page).

With continued practice in this profile approach, you will quickly become the tailor who creates instructional designs the results of which students will wear for many years to come.

Next, decide how you might accommodate the range of differences shown by your profile; establish your performance groups accordingly. Next, have students within a group share their stories. Discuss with these students the type of information found in each story such that students, themselves, can begin to recognize the episodic information commonly included in their performance level. Next share with your students the narratives reflecting a slightly higher criterion level (at this point, you may wish to bring in other students from a higher criterion level to help out collaborators in this instance). Discuss and illustrate how these narratives include episodic information which your students may wish to include in their future narratives. Also, you may wish to provide examples of how students' present narratives might be revised so as to include information from the next criterion level.

Should you wish, you may set up a narrative portfolio for each student. To mark the student's progress from one narrative composition to the next, you may wish to see how easily each student moves from a lower to a higher criterion level. In time, this may give you a better understanding for how to best organize students into groups and how to tailor instruction so that it best fits the size and shape of your students' narrative proficiencies. With continued practice in this profile approach, you will quickly become the tailor who creates instructional designs the results of which students will wear for many years to come.

Dr. Peter Mosenthal is Professor at Syracuse University, Director of the Reading and Language Arts Center, and a consultant with the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey.

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Should We Rely on the Degrees of Reading Power Test for Third Grade Testing in New York State?

— *Reva Cowan*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the mismatches between discourse structures and teaching practice in primary grades. In New York State, children are tested on expository text, but they are much more familiar with narrative text. The argument for authentic assessment is strongly made.

In New York State, Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) reading tests are given in grades 3, 6, 8, and 11. In each of these mandated tests, the students are tested with a form of the Degrees of Reading Power test (DRP). These tests have been devised by Touchstone Applied Science Associates, Inc. (TASA) in collaboration with the New York State Education Department. This paper will explore issues related to the use of the Degrees of Reading Power test at the primary level.

What is the Degrees of Reading Power Test?

According to the New York State Manual for Administrators and Teachers (1992), the Degrees of Reading Power Test for third grade consists of:

> 8 nonfiction prose passages...on randomly selected topics ...Each passage contains about 300 words. The passages are arranged in order of difficulty, beginning with very easy material and progressing to very difficult material. Test items are formed by the deletion of seven words in each passage...For each deletion, five single-word response options are provided. Students are required to read the text and select the word that most appropriately fits the blank. There are a total of 56 items on the grade 3 test... (p. 1).

TASA describes the DRP tests as being holistic measures of reading ability that do not measure discrete subskills as was the practice with many other reading tests (1990, p. 7). In this respect, TASA and the New York State Education Department are to be applauded. Reading should be measured in a holistic way. The question is whether or not the DRP test is the most appropriate holistic measure for a third grade student.

Readability of passages on the DRP tests and on the DRP rated materials is established using a cloze formula that was developed by Bormuth. The formula is based on four variables: the number of letters in a passage, the number of words in a passage, the number of Dale Long List words in the passage, and the number of sentences in the passage (Koslin, Koslin, Zeno, TASA & Ivens, 1989).

According to the New York State Manual For Administrators and Teachers (1992), "Readability (R) in this formula is a cloze score, or the proportion of correct restorations that would be expected if a large sample of students, with widely varying abilities, were to be given cloze tests on passage X" (p. 21).

TASA explains that topics for the many secured state forms of the tests are "drawn at random from the universe of all prose subject matter, using the topics of the Encyclopedia Britannica as a convenient taxonomy" (Koslin, et. al.,1989, p. 2). Indeed, the randomness can best be illustrated by the second passage that begins on page 6 of the 1992 New York State Pupil Evaluation Program test for third grade. The subject of the passage is Australian Aborigines.

A teacher in an upstate suburban community was surprised to learn that the passages were placed in order of difficulty in the New York State Grade 3 Reading Test. She indicated that when her primarily upper middle class students looked at the passage on the 1992 New York State PEP test, many of the students simply gave up. It was not that they had reached their maximum ability to comprehend text, rather they were asked to read about something that for them began with a barely decodable word - Aborigines. One must remember that the beginning of the second passage leaves six more to be read and completed. Her comment was "I have often wondered why the state does not select topics from the state curriculum guides for science and social studies for grades 1 through 3. At least then the students might have a frame of reference for the passages on the test."

The DRP tests at all grade levels are normed along the same continuum. In theory, then, a student's reading progress beginning in grade 3 can be measured along the continuum for each succeeding test in grades 6, 8, and 11. This theory of reading along a continuum falls apart, however, at the beginning when third grade students are given a test that is 16 pages of text. This non-supported continuous expository text is so unlike anything third grade students have typically encountered that calling the results of the test a measure of the most difficult text a student can read is an inaccuracy.

Kinds of text found in Basal Reading Programs: What kind of match to the DRP?

Because basal reading instruction is still common in primary classrooms (Flood & Lapp, 1986), basal readers

were examined for content. Six third grade basal readers from five publishers were analyzed to compare kinds of text found in basal readers to the DRP. I used the classifications designed by Flood and Lapp (1986) to determine the genres of text in basal reading programs. Texts were classified in one of six ways, according to whether selections were narrative, expository, poetry, plays, biography, or hybrid, meaning narrative in form but expository in function.

The basal readers were analyzed to determine the number of pages devoted to each genre. There was an overwhelming proportion of narrative text in the basal readers compared to expository text. Table 1 indicates the total number of pages in each reader devoted to the various genres, both in terms of the actual number of pages and in terms of the total percentages of pages.

Of the 1394 pages evaluated in the six readers, 982 pages were devoted to narrative materials. This accounts for more than 70% of the pages in the six basals. Ninety-two pages were expository text, less than 7% of the total number of pages. Indeed, the conclusion is absolute: basal reading material is almost wholly narrative text.

There are no studies that characterize the types of texts in literature-based classrooms, but Hiebert and Fisher (1990) note the lack of expository texts in the classrooms they studied. If the major portion of text for a typical reading experience of third grade students is narrative text, why do the New York State Education Department and TASA believe that students should be evaluated reading only expository text in the Pupil Evaluation Program tests? Rather than describing student results on the DRP test given in third grade as "a measure [of] the most difficult prose text a student can read with comprehension" (New York State Manual for Administrators and Teachers, 1992, p. 1) need to describe the results as being a measure of expository text reading only. Somewhere there also needs to be an indication to parents and teachers that most students have little experience reading expository text at the third grade level. The DRP for third grade measures a very specific kind of reading. It is not a general description of a student's ability to read prose.

The DRP for third grade... is not a general description of a student's ability to read prose.

How well does DRP measurement of student performance relate to text readability?

A raw score of 28 on the DRP test is the state reference point for pupils considered not in need of remediation for the third grade May 1992 PEP test. Using the book DRP Norms (TASA, 1988), it is possible to equate a DRP units score to a raw score. A raw score of 28 on the New York State PEP test translates to a score of 33 DRP units for the instructional level where the child has the opportunity to read with the probability of 75% accuracy. This same score may be equated to text readability of 33 DRP units, according to the New York State Education Department and TASA, Inc.

Assuming that a pupil in New York State has reached minimum competency and is not in need of remediation in May of third grade, that student is reading text material and literary selections with a readability of 33 DRP units at the instructional level. The frustration level for such a child where probability of accuracy is 50% is considered to be material written at 44 DRP units.

Translated into textbooks and literature, this paper will consider what TASA equates to the instructional and frustrational levels for the student achieving minimum competency in third grade an the New York State PEP test in reading.

Before looking at the mean readability for reading textbooks for the student achieving minimum competency, it is necessary to review some of the stated uses of scores in the New York State Manual for Administrators and Teachers (1992).

Scores obtained on the tests can be used for:

1) evaluating students' current level of achievement in reading;
2) determining the most difficult prose text a student can profitably use in instruction and in independent reading;
3) measuring growth in the ability to read with comprehension;..." (p. 1).

TASA also indicates stated uses for DRP readability scores for administrators and teachers. The ability to equate DRP readability of texts and literature to DRP

Table 1 Pages Devoted to Various Genres in Six Third Grade Basal Readers

Type of Writing	Basal Reader A	Basal Reader B	Basal Reader C	Basal Reader D	Basal Reader E	Basal Reader F	Total No. of Pages	Percent of Total Pages In All Basals
NARRATIVE	131	187	239	169	177	79	982	70.4%
EXPOSITORY	18	14	0	31	25	4	92	6.6%
POETRY	9	5	21	8	13	1	57	4.1%
PLAY	8	9	18	24	13	8	80	5.7%
BIOGRAPHY	12	10	13	9	17	1	62	4.4%
HYBRID	8	22	10	21	30	30	121	8.7%
TOTALS	186	247	301	262	275	123	1,394	100.0%

scores achieved on the Degrees of Reading Power test is emphasized as a primary advantage for using this kind of test (TASA, 1989, p. 2).

Basal Readers

The third grade basal readers reviewed for this paper had mean readability ratings ranging from 44 DRP units for series F to 50 DRP units for series A. Realizing that all of these third grade reading textbooks are considered to be beginning third grade books, or 3-1 readers, there appears to be a discrepancy between what the publishers consider to be appropriate third grade reading material and what TASA has designated as the readability levels of the readers. Table 2 illustrates the average TASA stated readability of the books considered for this study (TASA, 1989).

Where one must question TASA, and what is not sensible, is in the rated difficulty level of these beginning third grade books. According to TASA and the New York State Department of Education, a student achieving minimum competency on the 1992 PEP test has an instructional level of 33 DRP units and a frustration level of 44 DRP units. All of the basal readers considered in this study are at or above the frustrational level for the student achieving minimum competency on the PEP test. This is an issue of particular concern when one considers that the books evaluated are first half third grade books, and that these books would most likely be read by students achieving only minimum competency. Using these basal readers at the end of third grade would essentially place students a half school year behind the predicted use of the basal readers suggested by the publishers. That is, probably just where students achieving only minimum competency on the statewide third grade test would likely be reading.

Table 2 Mean Readability of Six Third Grade Basal Readers in DRP Units *

Basal Reader A	50
Basal Reader B	47
Basal Reader C	45
Basal Reader D	48
Basal Reader E	47
Basal Reader F	44

*Based on Readability of Textbook in Series, 8th Edition

What then can a student read in the basal reading series considered for this study at what TASA states is the instructional level of 33 DRP units? A look at Table 3 indicates that using the same readability source for conversion to DRP units, students achieving minimum competency in New York State can read books for instructional purposes that range from first preprimers in series A and E to the third preprimer in series C. For the other basal series considered in this study, the lowest TASA rated books in each series are: for series B a DRP readability of 35 for preprimer three, for series D a readability of 39 DRP units for the first grade reader, and for series F a primer rated at 40 DRP units of readability.

Table 3 Readability of Six Basal Reading series in proximity to 33 DRP Units*

Basal Series A	32 Preprimer 1
Basal Series B	35 Preprimer 3
Basal Series C	33 Preprimer 3
Basal Series D	39 First Reader
Basal Series E	33 Prepimer 1
Basal Series F	40 Primer

*Based on Readability of Textbooks in Series, 8th Edition

The overarching question is: What is considered minimum competency by New York State and TASA? Clearly one is unable to use DRP tests and readability ratings in conjunction with each other as indicated above,

> Administrators and specialists can decide which materials best serve students' needs and abilities as measured on Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) tests (TASA, 1989).

There is a disclaimer in the 1992 New York State Pupil Evaluation Program Tests manual that no doubt is meant to cover disputes with the TASA readability levels discussed.

> There is an important limitation on the use of readability indices in the third grade or when instructional materials are being sought for very poor readers in any grades. It is the shortage of easy materials in the Readability Report. This is because texts for beginning readers rarely contain connected prose passages that are long enough to permit readability analysis. Clearly, for many students, text selection must be accomplished in the absence of readability values.
>
> Teachers using the third grade DRP test for matching purposes must be aware that the Bormuth readability formula cannot be used to analyze many books that are suitable for beginning readers. Many students will obtain instructional level scores of less than 40 DRP units. Yet the Readability Report lists very few texts with readability values below 40. Under these conditions, text selection must be based on criteria other than formula readability.
>
> Thus, for some students in third grade, the DRP test is fundamentally a screening test. It separates those who have not yet developed the ability to comprehend connected sentences and paragraphs from those who have developed comprehension ability and would benefit from more challenging reading. The Readability Report will be very useful to teachers in selecting materials for the later group" (p. 11).

The question then becomes if the Readability Report does not predict what a third grade student can read, why use a test such as the DRP for third grade? A prime justification for the DRP test is that a student's test score can be converted to DRP units and then equated to specific reading materials.

At this point, it is useful to consider what an average third grade student in New York State is capable of reading according to formulas for DRP readability. Using the DRP Norms book it is possible to equate raw scores to the 49 percentile according to the nationally normed tests. (There is no available norm for the 50 percentile, the next available norm is for the 52 percentile.) A raw score of 38 on the 1992 New York State PEP test would be at the 49 percentile. This raw score converts to an instructional level of 42 DRP units and a frustration level of 53 DRP units of readability for an average student.

Without belaboring the point, as can be seen by Table 4, the basal materials in the vicinity of 42 DRP units tend to be at the second grade level. Is the average student at the end of third grade in New York State reading two years below grade level? This does not seem to make sense, even with the disclaimer in the 1992 Manual about few texts being available with a readability level below 40 DRP units. An average third grade student does comprehend connected sentences and paragraphs.

Table 4 Readability of Six Basal Reading Series in proximity to 42 DPP Units*

Basal Series A	43 2 / 2 Reader
Basal Series B	43 2 / 1 Reader
Basal Series C	41 Second Reader
Basal Series D	44 2 / 2 Reader
Basal Series E	44 2 / 2 Reader
Basal Series F	42 2 / 2 Reader

*Based on Readability of Textbooks in Series, 8th Edition

Questions about the inability to match reading performance on the Degrees of Reading Power test and student basal reading materials have been raised previously when the DRP Norms book provided grade level equivalents for DRP scores (Carver, 1985). Grade level equivalent scores are no longer available. However, deleting grade level equivalent scores for DRP scores has not eliminated the inherent problem of there being no match between measurements on the DRP test and on reading materials that have been given DRP readability levels.

Trade Books

In order to assess what trade books a student might read independently, selected books were considered. One must bear in mind that a third grade student in New York State achieving minimum competency can probably read material at 22 DRP units independently, 33 DRP units instructionally, and 44 DRP units at the frustrational level when one converts the raw score of 28 to DRP units. Likewise, an average student in third grade probably reads materials at an independent level of 31 DRP units, at an instructional level of 42 DRP units, and at a frustrational level of 53 DRP units. The literature selections may be viewed in the same way as the basal readers. There is little match between what teachers observe daily in minimally competent and/or average readers and what TASA indicates are appropriate reading materials.

The classic The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss that is read in first and second grade by most students has a rated DRP readability level of 35. Koko's Kitten by Patterson, a book that would be considered in the genre of hybrid and used in many primary classrooms, has a DRP readability of 48. Curious George Flies a Kite by Rey, a controlled vocabulary version of the Curious George books, is rated with a readability level of 40 DRP units. Other selected literature books are listed in Table 5. All of the ratings are based on the TASA published Readability of Literature and Popular Titles, Volume 2.

Indeed, what are we expecting third grade students who achieve minimum competency in New York State to read? Is it primer level material? Or, are we testing for something other than what is being stated? What are we expecting of an average third grade student? These are questions that need to be addressed.

Table 5 Literature Selections Rated in DRP Units*

Amelia Bedelia Helps Out	Parish	42
The Cat in the Hat	Seuss	35
Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs	Barrett	54
Curious George Flies a Kite	Ray	40
The Drinking Gourd	Monjo	45
Julian's Glorious Summer	Cameron	45
Koko's Kitten	Patterson	48
Miss Nelson Has a Field Day	Allard	47
Owl Moon	Yolen	48
Tales of Oliver Pig	Van Leeuwen	42
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears	Aardema	51

*Based on Readability of Literature and Popular Titles, Volume 2

Discussion

It is obvious that much of the time spent learning to read in the primary years in school is devoted to the study of narrative text. Yet in New York State students end the primary years being tested on a high-stakes test whose format and style of discourse is alien to the students' experience.

The concept of showing student progress along a continuum from the primary years to the end of high school is one that is worthy of consideration. It is also worthwhile to equate readability levels on a test to the readability of materials students use. However, at the primary levels through third grade, this concept does not seem to work. The disclaimer in the New York State Manual for Teachers and Administrators (1992) does not absolve the state from appropriately testing students in third grade, and then equating the test to actual reading materials that students are able to read.

Thinking about the disunity between materials students use when they are taught to read in the primary grades and the way that students are tested with expository text in New York State in the third grade, it is possible to understand how companies flourish selling test preparation materials. Although there is considerable discussion about test pollution when students are given preparatory materials prior to high stakes testing (Haladyna, Nolan &

Haas, 1991), one can sense the frustration teachers and administrators feel when preparing primary grade students for the DRP. Nowhere in students' experience is there enough encounter with text that is both continuous for sixteen pages with no illustrations, no user-friendly headings, no bold print, nor any of the other supportive text features that third graders are accustomed to seeing in reading materials. While it may not be defensible, it is possible to understand the reasons school personnel resort to test-like preparatory materials.

Added to the fact that DRP tests are unlike a third grade student's reading experiences, the fact that DRP tests are the format in New York State for Pupil Evaluation Program Tests, it is also possible to get a sense of teachers' and school administrators' feelings of impotence to affect real change in reading (Fraatz, 1987). When students are measured in ways that do not reflect the curriculum, teachers waste valuable instructional time prepping for high stakes tests (Smith, 1991).

...disunity between materials students use when they are taught to read in the primary grades and the way that students are tested with expository text in New York State in the third grade...

In closing the discussion about third grade reading assessment, it would seem to make more sense if the State Education Department would move toward more natural or authentic assessment (Johnston, 1992; Kirst, 1991; Paris, Lawton, Turner, & Roth, 1991) and away from testing that is so disparate from the curriculum. The other, though less preferable, possibility would be to work with TASA to devise a reading test that more accurately reflects reading instruction. What is the rationale for testing with only expository text?

Clearly the third grade DRP does not test with the genre of discourse that students are exposed to for the majority of their reading experiences. The Degrees of Reading Power test in third grade is not useful for matching student reading levels on the test to reading materials. It is time to rethink the technology for third grade reading competency testing.

Ms. Cowan, a doctoral student in the Department of Reading at the University at Albany, is currently employed as a reading specialist in the Poughkeepsie City School District.

Notes

1. The basal readers examined for the study are recent series from the following publishers: Holt Basic Reading, Macmillan Connections Reading Program, D.C. Heath Reading, Scott Foresman Focus, Scott Foresman An American Tradition, and Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich Reading Program.

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Portfolios in the Classroom: The Right Tool at the Right Time

— *Barbara E. Combs*

ABSTRACT

This article supports the use of portfolios in the classroom. By weaving fact with fiction, the author introduces Ms. Gilmore, an elementary classroom teacher and a proponent of whole language. The article traces Ms. Gilmore's search for an assessment tool which matches her classroom instruction. The portfolio is explored as a tool of assessing her instruction with children's actual learning. Definitions of portfolios are discussed and the contents of one student's portfolio is described and explained.

Imagine for a moment that you pull back the throttle, and the nose of the airplane edges away from the runway toward a cloudless sky. It is your pre-solo flight... Your flight instructor sits beside you calmly sharing your confidence and excitement. Fifty minutes later, your wheels touch *terra firma*.... You made it! Now for the debriefing. Your instructor smiles, extends a hand, says, "Good job, you get a B," climbs out of the cockpit and walks toward the hangar (Farnan & Kelly, 1991).

Imagine, for a moment, any flight school instructor giving this response to a student — ludicrous! The letter grade "B" has no value for this would-be pilot. Instead, this student must know which moves are correct and which might cause problems. After all, this individual's life is at stake.

Consider now a different arena, but one in which the stakes are as high. Imagine a classroom. Ms. Gilmore, a fifteen year veteran, has changed her style. She is well aware of the major shift in instruction which has taken place over the last two decades. No longer are her students viewed as depositories and the teacher the depositor (Friere, 1992). No longer is this "banking concept" of learning practiced in her classroom. She now views learning as a process of creating meaning. She knows that learning is not linear and that it varies in style and pace.

Ms. Gilmore has not changed her teaching overnight. Rather, over time she has adopted new beliefs about teaching and learning. She has experimented with a variety of teaching techniques which she has read about and has seen modeled at conferences and in other classrooms. She also believes that her students perform better when they work from models. She knows that her students must reflect on their own learning. In doing so, they will know when to use knowledge and how to adapt it to various situations. She recognizes how important motivation, effort and self-esteem are to the learning process, and her belief that learning has a social context causes her to incorporate group work into her class activities (Herman, Aschbacher & Winters, 1992).

Ms. Gilmore describes herself as a whole language teacher. She has incorporated into her daily activities Tierney, Carter and Desai's (1991) six components of the holistic classroom. Reading and writing are taught together. Students select their own texts and writing topics. They develop and share their own meanings of text and based on this sharing, revise their understandings. Ms. Gilmore's students read authentic materials. They also learn through making use of multiple sources such as peers, books and films. In addition, her students vary their responses to different texts and they read and write for a variety of purposes. Finally, a major goal of Ms. Gilmore's program has been "...the empowerment of her students and the development of their independence" (Tierney, Carter & Desai, 1991, p.29).

Such aspects of this holistic philosophy are evident when one peers into this whole language classroom. It is immediately apparent that Ms. Gilmore and her students have decided to learn about dinosaurs. In one corner of the room, Jane, Ed and Lana sit on a carpet talking about their favorite character in the novel, *A Dinosaur Bites the Dust*. Their conversation is being tape recorded. Later, Ms. Gilmore will listen to sections of the tape to determine the level of detail these children use when talking about characters.

In another part of the room, Shane, Jenny and Curt talk animatedly about their plans for a diorama which will depict the environment of herbivore dinosaurs. Nearby, Erin and Joe are in the middle of a peer writing conference. Joe is reading his report about tyrannosaurus. He has asked Erin to listen for at least five facts. After he finishes, Erin will read her poem "The Last Pterodactyl". She hopes Joe finds the poem sad since this is the feeling she wants to elicit from her audience.

Doug and Derek are seated at a table near the window, drawing a graph entitled "The Age of the Dinosaur". They are using information from a time-line in their social studies text to help them. Other children are reading stories or writing in their literature response logs or writing notebooks. Ms. Gilmore is walking around the room. She has decided to spend fifteen minutes observing students as they work in groups. She has a clipboard with the index cards labeled Lana, Joe and Curt. As these students engage in their various activities, she writes notes about their attention to task as well as any comments they make which enhance their group's work.

At the end of this day, Ms. Gilmore will bring the students into a discussion circle. Each will share at least one thing he or she discovered about dinosaurs or about

themselves as learners which they did not know before. These comments will be added to the chart "New Discoveries" which has been posted at the front of the room. In addition, Ms. Gilmore will describe the positive aspects of group work which she observed and will point out to students one weak area which they will continue to work on over the next few days.

Imagine now, that time has passed and the unit on dinosaurs has come to a close. The students have reached what Ms. Gilmore refers to as their "solo flying" day. They arrive in the morning to a very different looking room. The desks have been reorganized into neat, tidy rows. Ms. Gilmore asks students to please sit down and take out two number two pencils. She notes that they must sharpen them before the test begins, since they will not be able to get out of their seats during the exam. Ms. Gilmore has developed a two page test in order to assess their learning. As she hands out the tests, she tells students they have one hour to complete the unit exam on dinosaurs. She reminds them that they must work quietly and by themselves.

There is a distressing mismatch between the instruction... and assessment of the children's learning.

Part I of the test includes 20 multiple choice items. One reads:

Which of the dinosaurs was the most vicious?

a. Tyrannosaurus
b. Triceratops
c. Barney

Part II contains ten fill in the blank items. Question 22 reads:

The age of the dinosaurs was between _____ and _____.

Part III is an essay. Students are given ten "Dinosaur Facts", but only five of them are correct. Students are to select the five correct items and use these to write a report, complete with topic and concluding sentences.

As the children work, Ms. Gilmore notices that the usual hum and energy which she enjoys in the classroom is missing. In addition, the students seem nervous and even frustrated as they try to complete the tasks.

What is wrong here? Certainly, this assessment tool generates a grade and the students have a score for six weeks or more of work, but what does it really tell Ms. Gilmore about what her students have learned about dinosaurs and how they have progressed as readers and writers? Really, very little. This traditional testing format most likely taps only a small portion of what the children actually know and can do. In addition, the multiple choice, short answer format calls attention to specific bits of information and therefore exaggerates their importance. The whole ideology of learning as an interactive process is undermined (Pappas, Kiefer & Levstik, 1990). The students are left not knowing whether they truly know about dinosaurs, just as the pilot is left not knowing whether he or she truly knows how to fly an airplane. There is a distressing mismatch between the instruction which has taken place over the last six weeks and assessment of the children's learning. Such occurrences are not uncommon; while the classroom practice is of the 20th century, the assessment procedure is in the age of dinosaurs. In many classrooms, such as those of Ms. Gilmore, assessment techniques lag woefully behind current methods of instruction (Kelly & Farnan, 1991).

To some this may not come as a surprise. If we look at learning as a process, we can see that there may be stages involved in any change. Perhaps the first stage is studying, looking at, and incorporating the components of holistic instruction. As practice continues, a second stage which recognizes the need for a better match between instruction and assessment becomes obvious. In recent years, many educators, both those in research and in practice, have come to recognize the lack of congruence between traditional, measurement-based assessment tools and whole language practices (Farnan & Kelly, 1991; Lamme & Hysmith, 1990). As a result of this recognition, a call to modify assessment so that it meshes with changing views towards learning and instruction have come from society in general: The Carnegie Task Force, The Holmes Group, the National Association For the Advancement of Colored People and educators, in particular The National Education Association and the Association of Elementary School Principles (Gomez, Graue & Bloch, 1991).

No doubt, because of her changing views about how children learn and demonstrate that learning, Ms. Gilmore will soon come to this second stage of awareness. Then, the multiple choice test at the end of the previous unit on dinosaurs will be seen as an inappropriate, inadequate method for determining her students' understandings and literacy growth. It is at this point that she will look to models of authentic assessment to help her make changes in her assessment procedures.

Models and suggestions will not be difficult to find. There has been a great deal of research concerning authentic assessment also called alternative or performance based assessment. A number of authors have described its characteristics (Harp, 1991; Herman, Aschbacher & Winter, 1992; Tierney, Desai & Carter, 1991). Valencia (1990) offers the following four principles:

1. Sound assessment is anchored in authenticity - authenticity of tasks, texts, and contexts.
2. Assessment must be a continuous, on-going process; it must chronicle development.
3. Assessment must be multidimensional - committed to sampling a wide range of cognitive processes, affective processes and literacy activities.
4. Assessment must provide for active, collaborative reflection by both teacher and student.

In thinking about these four principles, it seems that traditional measures such as tests of basic skills, end of unit exams, formulaic essays and standardized tests will not meet the needs of the teacher and students in the holistic classroom.

The next question for Ms. Gilmore and others might be "What can I use?" Ironically she is already making use of many of the tools which incorporate Valencia's four principles of authentic assessment. Anecdotal records, writing logs, reading response logs, audio tapes and student self-reflections are all examples of instruments of alternative assessment which are currently part of her classroom practice. Looking at these classroom records rather than at unit test scores or perhaps, if the system requires such measures, even in addition to test scores, will tell her what she needs to know about her students. In fact, when these items are looked at over time Ms. Gilmore will have fairly complete information about her students' understandings, attitudes and levels of literacy.

Each of the authentic instruments alone, including any traditional evaluation measures, is only a puzzle piece in time. It is the collection of these pieces into a coherent whole which yields a complete picture of any student. The portfolio is a powerful instrument which brings all of these pieces together. In her struggles to incorporate more authentic practices into her instructional program, Ms. Gilmore may want to develop a portfolio assessment system.

...the portfolio is a living collection of works creating an entire picture of a student's attitudes, learning and literacy...

What is a portfolio? Ask ten educators this question and there will be ten different definitions. Ms. Gilmore is not alone in her desire to match instruction and assessment. Many teachers have been experimenting with various modes of assessment, and during the last ten years, the grassroots exploration of portfolios as a potential tool of authentic assessment has exploded. As a result, portfolio definitions are as varied as the practitioners who use them. While this may be frustrating, many would argue that this is as it should be. The portfolio by nature should be flexible and adaptable; thus its definition must be comprehensive and fluid.

In its most broad sense the portfolio is a collection of works. Most professional artists carry portfolios to show to art dealers and galleries. Fredericks, Meinbach and Rothlein (1993) define it as "a coordinated assembly of past and present work that provides the viewer with a definitive and representational look at the artist's work and talent" (p. 87). Pappas, Kiefer and Levstick (1990) define student portfolios as "a collection of works and other information providing a profile documenting children's learning" (p. 322). Notice how this broad definition empowers the teacher and her students. They must fill in the details of purpose, design, and content.

Of course, portfolios have been classified. Fredericks, Meinbach and Rothlein (1993), in their text *Thematic Units*, discuss three basic types types of portfolios: showcase, descriptive and evaluative. The showcase portfolio is a collection of best works selected solely by the students. The descriptive portfolio consists of works predetermined by the teacher who measures the content against a set of standards. The evaluative portfolio contains items which are ranked, rated and scored. This latter portfolio most closely resembles traditional assessment tools.

Many educators, however, are not comfortable with such categorization. Belanoff and Dickson (1991), Graves and Sunstein (1992), and Yancey (1992) caution against taking too narrow a view of portfolios in this their infancy. To limit their definitions is to limit their possibilities. The portfolio cannot and should not be so easily corralled. Any definition or design offered must be viewed, for the present, as one of many suggestions of what portfolios might be. Recall that the holistic classroom is dynamic. It grows, moves, and changes as the students explore and learn about their world. The portfolio as an instrument of assessment in such a classroom should be no less dynamic.

Simply stating that the portfolio is a living collection of works creating an entire picture of a student's attitudes, learning and literacy may not help Ms. Gilmore as she tries to make use of these in her classroom. Should students gather up all their writings, responses, reflections, pictures of projects and put them into a folder? Should Ms. Gilmore also include audio tapes, video tapes and teacher observations? When this is done - so what? Suppose she has twenty-nine students? Will all of this material become a pile of artifacts too unwieldy to give her the information, she, her students, her administrators and her students' parents seek? These are real world questions no matter how imaginary Ms. Gilmore's class may be.

Admittedly, the portfolio would be short lived if it added too heavy a burden to the already harried and overworked teacher; however, it is too important, too telling a tool of authentic assessment to go the way of other educational fads. In order to survive, it must be viewed as flexible, adaptable and open-ended, empowering students and teachers by allowing them to make the decisions as to what understandings and growth it will demonstrate (King, 1991). Also, it must be recognized that the portfolio will yield a comprehensive picture, but that the picture will change throughout a given school year and in subsequent years. It is possible, for example, to develop multiple portfolios through the course of the year. The data from each might then be merged every quarter. At year's end students and their teacher may work together to create individual portfolios which demonstrate the breadth and depth of their learning during that school year. Perhaps, in addition, the class will decide to put together a composite portfolio which shows a picture of the class as a whole, who they are and what they have accomplished.

Let's assume that Ms. Gilmore has decided to develop a portfolio system for use in her classroom. During the process of development, she needs to keep in mind three points: the principles for authentic assessment, the learning goals for her class and school, and the goals for the portfolio itself. It is important to remember that these

goals are unique to Ms. Gilmore's world. Another portfolio system would look very different.

Let's return now to Ms. Gilmore's class later in the school year. By this time, she has read a great deal about authentic assessment and specifically about portfolio assessment. She has decided to try it with her class. She knows her holistic classroom climate is right for portfolio use. Students are immersed in reading, writing, speaking and listening activities. They have large blocks of time in which to work. They also have choice in reading and writing, and receive positive responses to their ideas (Reif, 1992).

Ms. Gilmore has reviewed the principles of authentic assessment in her thinking about what these portfolios might contain. She knows that she and her students must be selective (Valencia, 1990). The collections can not contain all of their work. This would make them unwieldy and useless. Still, she wants her students' portfolios to contain examples of a variety of the authentic tasks completed over time which illustrate their growth in literacy and learning. She also wants the students involved in the planning and design, so, on the day she introduces the portfolio concept she says: "Here is a new way to keep our work and to choose what is important. I am going to need help in finding the best way to help you and me make it work." (Graves & Sunstein, 1992).

To help them think about planning, Ms. Gilmore posted two charts on the wall. One looks like this:

BELIEFS ABOUT PORTFOLIO USE

Readers and writers know more about their own abilities and progress than outsiders do. Thus, they can be the prime evaluators of themselves and their work.

Choice is a hallmark of a reading-writing classroom. Thus, teachers and students will decide what to put in their individual Literacy Portfolios.

In reading-writing workshops, teachers and students work together. Both teachers and students will create portfolios.

The second chart, which lists the learning goals for the class looks like this:

LEARNING GOALS FOR OUR CLASS

We will develop positive attitudes, habits and behaviors towards reading and writing.

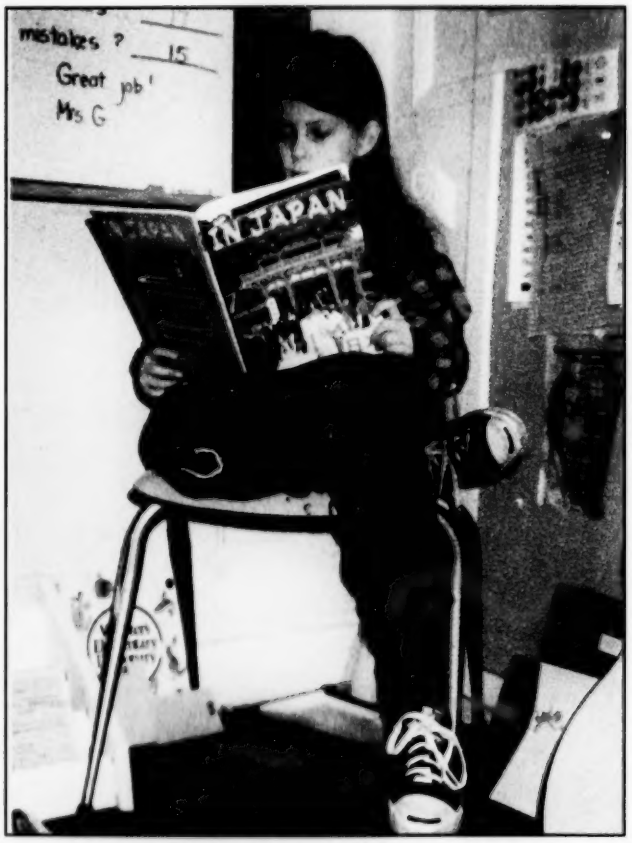
We will develop strategies to use in reading

We will write in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes

We will engage in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities daily.

We will develop techniques for working together.

Using these two charts as guides, Ms. Gilmore and her students make and remake their portfolios. To illustrate



Eve Burstein, a second grade student at The Children's School, is reading a self-selected book.

what the contents of one portfolio might be, let's look at what one student, Lana, has developed. It is late in the school year and Lana has just completed a second portfolio conference with Ms. Gilmore. She will now take her portfolio home and present it to her parents. Lana enjoys such presentations. Her front cover bears the title: ***THIS IS ME, LANA E.*** in bold black magic marker. Her portfolio is a three-ring binder so that she may place and replace items which relate to her literacy growth. Below is a list of the contents in Lana's portfolio:

1. A letter of introduction. Each time she is ready to present her portfolio to someone, she writes a new letter. In it she describes what the reader will find in her collection.

2. Pictures of me and my friends. A page of pictures of herself and her friends throughout the year. Lana wants people to know that she is growing physically and socially as well as intellectually.

3. Places I have been. A page of pictures of places she has been. Each picture has a caption. Here people will learn about her life outside of the classroom doors.

4. Three writing samples. One from the beginning of the school year, one from the middle and one from her most recent attempts. Ms. Gilmore helped her to select the third sample. With these Lana includes a letter which

explains how these three samples demonstrate her growth in writing.

5. Summary of writing titles & topics. A list of titles and types of writing topics to demonstrate that she has written in a variety of modes.

6. Two response journals. One talks about her favorite character in *A Dinosaur Bites the Dust*, and one presents predictions of what she thinks might happen in *Julie's Strange Adventure*, a novel that was read by the whole class. Lana also included a short paragraph explaining why these stories were meaningful to her.

7. A reading list. The list identifies all of the stories and articles she has read so far this year. She has labeled each of these by genre to demonstrate variety in her reading.

8. An audio tape of oral reading. The tape which has several dated entries, illustrates her improvement in oral reading.

9. Teacher's observations. Two pages of Ms. Gilmore's observations of Lana working in groups and individually. Ms. Gilmore has included those things that Lana can do well along with statements listing strategies which might help Lana improve in one or two areas. The second page of observations is signed, indicating that Lana and Ms. Gilmore have talked about these during their portfolio conference.

10. Standardized test results. A copy of Lana's results on the standardized test along with a letter from Lana explaining first what the scores tell about what she can do, and second what she is able to do which the scores don't tell. (Ms. Gilmore talked to the class about what standardized tests can and cannot show about learning.)

11. Completed projects. A list of projects which Lana has completed. Lana has also indicated which of the subject areas she has worked on during the unit projects (e.g., math and science).

12. Letters of knowledge. A series of letters, written at the end of each thematic unit, in which Lana explains her new understandings in the various content areas.

13. Goal sheets. The sheets list new and accomplished goals. At the bottom of the goal sheets, both Lana and Ms. Gilmore have placed their signatures.

14. Letters from home. Two letters from Lana's parents are included here. One describes what activities Lana is engaged in at home and what they hope Lana will learn in school. The second describes their reactions to Lana's first portfolio conference with them.

Lana's parents can now look at her latest collection and comment on it. These comments along with the goals set by Lana and Ms. Gilmore are important. In this way, the portfolio becomes an assessment tool which also informs instruction (Lamme & Hysmith, 1991).

Both Ms. Gilmore and her students are pleased with the contents of such a portfolio system. Its creation, however, has not been an easy task. It took a great deal of time both in and out of class to create and recreate these collections of artifacts which "provide a common framework to discuss learning and achievement" (Gomez, Graue & Bloch, 1991). Still, a match between authentic instruction and assessment has been made.

The case for portfolios in today's classrooms is strong. Teachers can track and analyze each student's progress, and children can demonstrate what they know and formulate goals for what they have yet to learn. The age of *"Good job, you get a B"* belongs to the age of dinosaurs. Portfolios in the classroom, while neither an elixir nor a panacea, hold great promise for bringing assessment into the 21st century.

Ms. Barbara E. Combs is a doctoral candidate in The Reading and Language Arts Center at Syracuse University.

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From the Shelves of Hodge-Podge

— Frank Hodge

***Editors' note**: Frank Hodge, our good friend and colleague, generously allowed us to cut and paste from several editions of his newsletter, **Chapters**, for the book recommendations that are presented here.*

MUST READS

These books are powerful reads and will make the reader stop and think. Out of the headlines and into book form is **THE KILLING BOY** by Gloria Miklowitz (Bantam, 1993, $3.50). Once again Gloria takes a current event and fictionalizes a treatment for upper readers. She has deftly handled steroids and AIDS with great passion and insights. Her treatment is spine-tingling and will hold readers trapped until the last page.

READING TO MATTHEW by Jacqueline J. Vivelo, illustrated by Birgitta Saflund (Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1993, $15.95), is an absolute must for every home and classroom in the world! John, reluctantly at first, has been told by his mother to read aloud to younger brother, Matthew. He does, and the chemistry which develops is real magic. Matthew is injured and comatose in the hospital. John asks permission to continue reading the story they were doing when the accident occurred. This book clearly demonstrates the power of reading aloud. Wow!

A triple whammy — Patricia MacLachlan will enthrall readers of all ages. **JOURNEY** (Dell, 1993, $3.50) now in paperback is available for a much larger readership. I have to wonder who the book is actually for — children, young adults, or maybe we adults. Makes no difference — the read is well worth it. I loved it. The story remained with me long after I finished the actual reading. **BABY** (Delacorte, 1993, $13.95) is extraordinary and will have great appeal, especially for older readers. The role of the teacher here is exceptional. Also, many of us sat at our TV sets and watched as Glen Close made Sarah come alive in **SKYLARK** (Harper-Collins, March 1994, $12.00), the sequel to **SARAH PLAIN AND TALL**. This woman is one of our greatest writers for young readers. All three of these stories will stay with you long after the books are closed.

NEXT YEAR I'LL BE SPECIAL by Patricia Reilly Giff, pictures by Marilyn Hafner (Doubleday, 1993, $13.95), is one of my personal favorites. Simply this is the story of a child who is not having a good year at school so she spends her time daydreaming about what next year will be like when she has a different teacher. The book is comic and sad. One laughs at the child's dreams, but the older reader has to ponder the situation in which the child is floundering. It is sad to imagine that any child would have to endure an entire year in an unhappy school situation, and at the same time, think of the teacher in this situation also. This is a book to make readers think.

In Hadley Irwin's latest book, **JIM-DANDY** (Macmillan, 1994, $14.95 due out April 94), we meet a young boy whose beloved pet horse, Dander, is sold by his stepfather to the US Army. Jim runs away and finds his horse has been sold to George Custer for his wife. He makes himself indispensable to the man in charge of Custer's stable and thereby gets to stay with his horse. The adventures are bloody and cruel, and Jim learns firsthand about the horrors of Indian fighting. The text does not glorify what happened in our past but rather raises some interesting issues for young readers to discuss. The story is exciting and should keep young readers mesmerized.

MAKE A WISH, MOLLY by Barbara Cohen, illustrated by Jan Naimo Jones (Doubleday, 1994, $14.95), is subtitled A Companion to **MOLLY'S PILGRIM**. This alone makes the book a winner for me. Now we follow Molly and her mother adjusting to another American tradition, celebrating birthdays. This was not done in Russia, but Molly and her mother learn about themselves and their own traditions in a whole new way. I have the feeling this new book will make its way into American hearts the way the previous one did. The illustrations are pencil drawings and seem appropriately aged for the storyline.

GREAT MULTICULTURAL PICKS!

Good for Everybody

SOUL LOOKS BACK IN WONDER by Tom Feelings (Dial, 1993, $15.95) is a beautiful collection of poetry in praise of the African-American spirit. Artist Tom Feelings utilizes poetry from 13 major American poets in this volume. The poetry is magnificent and the illustrations are absolutely breath-taking. The combination makes for a MUST HAVE FOR CLASSROOM, HOME AND LIBRARY! Maya Angelou's poem, "I Love the Look of Words" or Langston Hughes' piece, "To You" help set this book aside as something truly special.

Finally into paper comes **A BROWN BIRD SINGING** by Frances Wosmek, illustrated by Ted Lewin (Beech Tree Books-Morrow and Co. 1993, $4.95). This story of Anego, a Chippewa Indian girl who has lived with a white family since the death of her mother, and now faces the fear of being returned to her father so the two of them can be a family again. The story is literally taken from the headlines of major news events which occurred this past summer.

To help explore our Northern neighbors, I suggest **NORTHERN LIGHTS: The Soccer Trails** by Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak, art by Vladyana Krykorka (Annick Press, 1993, $5.95). For the Inuit people, soccer is a traditional game. As the sea ice freezes over, a giant soccer field is illuminated by the Northern Lights. This story also speaks of the belief that these brilliant lights represent loved ones who have died. The text and art here are

THE MUSHROOM MAN by Ethel Pochocki, illustrated by Barry Moser (Green Tiger Press, 1993, $15.00), ends with, "but the very best gift of all was having a friend." Sounds pleasant enough. Getting to that end line though in a storyline—most improbable—through shadowy yet sensitive illustrations is a trip you will love taking.

Nominated for Nebraska's Golden Sower award and now in paper is the beautiful **SALT HANDS** by Jane Chelsea Aragon, illustrated by Ted Rand (Puffin, 1993, $4.99). Bewitchingly beautiful, majestic wild deer and child meet in the evening time and share special moments in this magical tale.

SHADOW THE DEER by Theresa Radcliffe, illustrated by John Butler (Viking, 1993, $13.99), is straight-forward and very exciting. Mother deer leaves her fawn concealed in the grass while she eats. However, Redflank, a vixen, is hungry. Then things begin to happen quickly, and Shadow, the deer, fights to save her child. The artwork literally leaps off the page and into your lap and life. A book for all ages.

In **EVERY AUTUMN COMES THE BEAR** by Jim Arnosky (Putnam, 1993, $14.95). This simple text follows a bear about as he ambles through the woods, up the rocks and ultimately into a den where he then sleeps for the winter. The artwork here is spectacular.

Bring your reader/listeners into the Montana mountains in a most unusual survival story where boy and bear cub are fighting for their lives. **RESCUE JOSH MC GUIRE** by Ben Mikaelsen (Hyperion, 1993, $4.50) is based on just that. The suspense is grippingly tight, the animal antics sure to amuse and edify, and the plot is a true winner. (Recommended for upper middle grades but could be a good read aloud for young listeners.)

LOST IN THE DEVIL'S DESERT by Gloria Skurzenski (Beech Tree-Morrow and Co. Inc, 1993, $3.95) is another welcome edition for the survival unit. The story is fast paced (The boy witnesses two convicts robbing and beating the junkyard owner, so he hides in a pick-up truck which most unfortunately is the crooks' getaway truck.) with Kevin stranded in a desert where he faces heat, rocks, dust and, of course, rattlesnakes. Readers should find this one un-put-downable book.

Preservation of the natural world is the theme found in **SATO AND THE ELEPHANTS** by Juanita Havill, illustrated by Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1993, $15.00). This is a lovely book with story and art in complete harmony.

THE WEIRDO by Theodore Taylor (Avon, 1993, $3.50) follows the adventures of Samantha Sanders as she and Chip Clewt, the Weirdo, unravel the mystery of a killer who leaves his victims in the swamp area Chip has vowed to protect. Wonderful suspense, great love-friendship element, and good information about the struggle to preserve our wetlands. Upper middle school.

Frank Hodge, recipient of the 1993 Fellows Award of the NYSEC, is a widely sought after teacher/consultant and presenter regarding children's and adolescents' literature. This year he is authoring a national newsletter for Scholastic entitled "Hodge-Podge-Book Notes".

in absolute perfect harmony. Super for Younger Children!

IT TAKES A VILLAGE by Jane Cowen-Fletcher (Scholastic, 1993, $14.95) is a tender story of little brother Kokou wandering off when his sister Yemi has taken him to the market. Lovely illustrations of the African marketplace as Yemi searches in vain for her brother help make this book appealing. The trip is highly informative and the resolution very satisfying for all who come to this village.

WHAT IS YOUR LANGUAGE? song by Debra Leventhal, pictures by Monica Wellington (Dutton, 1993, $12.99) is basically a world tour asking the title question and receiving various answers. This book is a nice early look at our diverse world.

KISS THE DUST by Elizabeth Laird ($7.50) brings the young reader into direct conflict and contact with Kurds and the Kurdish resistance in Iraq.

GOING HOME by Margaret Wild, illustrated by Wayne Harris (Scholastic, 1994, $14.95), follows Hugo from his hospital bed out into the world he conjures up in his mind because of the zoo nearby. The imaginative trips and tricks Hugo invents keep him occupied until he departs. At this time he shares his secret with two other children from the ward in the hopes of relieving their respective boredoms. The art is vivid and free with a great sense of movement especially in his dream sequences in the African grasslands or the jungle.

ESCAPE FROM SLAVERY: The Boyhood of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words edited and illustrated by Michael McCurdy (Knopf, 1994, $5.99) has taken an adult autobiography and shortened and rewritten sections to make this 61 page account for younger readers. He is very true to the original account often quoting directly from that text. Most importantly he has made the life of this great man accessible to younger readers.

JAFTA: the homecoming by Hugh Lewin, pictures by Lisa Kopper (Random House, An Umbrella Book, 1994, $8.99), presents the reader with Jafta waiting for his father, a miner, to return home. Jafta recounts all of the things his father has missed, events which have meant a great deal to the child: e.g., a big storm. The illustrations are sepia-tones and very large for the size pages used here. The vibrancy and movement of the people are captured wonderfully by Ms. Kooper. The book has great vitality.

SADAKO by Eleanor Coerr, illustrated by Ed Young (Putnam, 1993, $16.95), is the picturebook version of **SADAKO AND THE 1000 PAPER CRANES**. Now, the story of courage and strength can be shared with young readers. The illustrations are hauntingly beautiful.

Great for Older Readers!

FREEDOM'S CHILDREN Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories (Avon Flare, 1993, $3.99) is a gold mine of firsthand experiences crafted and shaped by a master story-teller, Ellen Levine.

AGAINST THE STORM by Gaye Hicyilmaz (Dell Yearling, 1993, $3.50) takes the reader into contemporary Turkey. This is an amazing story of one boy's struggle against numbing poverty.

The first book in Joan Lowery Nixon's trilogy about Ellis Island is out in paper. **LAND OF HOPE** (Dell, 1993, $3.50) begins the story of three immigrant girls (Rebekah Levinsky from Russia; Kristin Swensen from Sweden and Rose Carney from Ireland) who meet and become friends on board ship coming to America. This first volume covers the sea voyage and then Rebekah's settling on the Lower East side of NYC. **LAND OF PROMISE** and **LAND OF DREAMS** are not in paperback format yet. (Both are Bantam, $16.00).

SON OF THUNDER by Stig Holmas, translated by Anne Born, illustrations by John Hurford (Harbinger House, 1993, $10.95), is a reprint of an 1985 Norwegian children's book. This story follows the life of Sonof-Thunder, an Apache boy, who joins forces with Cochise and Geronimo in their desperate defense of their traditional homeland against the encroaching white man. An intense look at life among the Southwestern Native American peoples. It would be a good addition for middle grades and early secondary.

BUILDING A BRIDGE by Lisa Shook Begaye, illustrated by Libba Tracy (Northland, 1993, $14.95), is the story of two very different young girls who with great trepidation come to kindergarten. Anna, an Anglo and Junita, a Navajo, meet for the first time and by building a castle together with multi-colored blocks discover some important facts, mainly that differences can indeed make things magical.

Civil War units get a boost this season with the introduction of Jennifer Armstrong's **STEAL AWAY** in paper (Scholastic,1993, $3.25). Susannah, a white orphan, and Bethlehem, a black slave, are runaways. This tale of courage and grit will hold the most reluctant reader spellbound. The messages Jennifer brings to the reader through the two characters transcend the time period and make connections for today's young people also.

NATURE

FANTASTIC FLYING JOURNEY by Gerald Durrell ($12.95) is the best way possible of introducing children to the subjects of wildlife, geography and conservation. The book covers all of the main areas of the world as experienced by two children, their uncle and his giant balloon. It also covers the entire third grade NYS curriculum.

Saying good-bye to one's wild friend after time in the country has never been handled quite so beautifully as done in **HONKERS** by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Leslie Baker (Little Brown and Co., 1993, $14.95). Betsy must stay with her grandparents while mother is expecting her second child. Grandparents have three large eggs and Betsy takes one as her own. The artwork of watercolors adds dramatically to the strong storyline. The paintings seem to breathe and live as one proceeds from start to finish.

MY BOOK!

by David L. Harrison

I did it!
I did it!
Come and look
At what I've done!
I read a book!
When someone wrote it
Long ago
For me to read,
How did he know
That this was the book
I'd take from the shelf
And lie on the floor
And read by myself?
I really read it!
Just like that!
Word by word,
From first to last!
I'm sleeping with
This book in bed,
This first FIRST book
I've ever read!

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New York State Reading Association
28th Annual Conference

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November 1-4, 1994
Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York

Literacy in the Global Community

The theme of the 1994 conference is ***Literacy in the Global Community***. Hundreds of professional educators and researchers have submitted proposals for presentation that reflect both this theme and current issues/topics in reading.

This year's conference continues NYSRA's tradition of featuring a variety of outstanding authors, illustrators and educators. **Douglas Wood**, author of the 1993 IRA award-winning book, Old Turtle, is a composer and performer who will address the conference with his message and music. We'll hear from **Jan Brett,** author/illustrator of old and new favorite picture books such as The Mitten, Beauty and the Beast, Berlioz and the Bear, and Fritz and the Beautiful Horses.

Educators moving from skill-based to whole language programs will be delighted to hear from **Regie Routman**, author of Transitions and Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K - 12.

NYSRA is co-sponsoring two pre-conference institutes. One of the institutes by **John Guthrie**, **John O'Flahaven** and several teacher-researchers will present a collaborative model of classroom research. The second institute is by **The Highlights Foundation;** numerous authors, illustrators and editors will discuss the writing and illustrating of children's books with mentor participants in the institute.